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Canadian Historic Sites

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Indian and Northern Affairs
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The Battle of Queenston Heights,
by Carol Whitfield

A History of Fort George, Upper Canada,
by Robert S. Allen

The Battle of Châteauguay,
by Victor J. H. Suthren

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Cover: a, The uniform of a private of the Lower Canada Select Embodied Militia; *b,* The uniform of a private of the Light Company of Canadian Fencibles; *c,* The uniform of a private of the Canadian Voltigeurs; *d,* The uniform of a private of the Lower Canada Sedentary Militia (*Drawings by Victor J. H. Suthren*).

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The Battle of Queenston Heights

by Carol Whitfield

Abstract

The village of Queenston, Upper Canada, was the scene of the second major American invasion of British territory in the War of 1812. Early on 13 October 1812, the Americans, under Stephen and Solomon Van Rensselaer, crossed the Niagara River and gained a foothold, despite the efforts of the small British force stationed there. Major General Isaac Brock and his provincial aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonell, were killed in unsuccessful attempts to dislodge the invaders. Late in the day a large group of reinforcements under Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe defeated the Americans, taking more than nine hundred prisoners. The British losses, although slight, were significant because Brock, the president and commanding officer of Upper Canada, was killed.

The Battle

High on a hill in Queenston stands a monument of a British general, Isaac Brock, the president of Upper Canada from 9 October 1811 to 13 October 1812.[1] It was erected by the colonists on the battlefield where he died trying to halt an American attack. The Battle of Queenston Heights was the first battle of the War of 1812. It was preceded by a minor incident at Michilimackinac and a hasty surrender at Detroit, but at Queenston men died in an effort to stop an invading army which, had it been successful, would probably have gone on to capture Upper Canada because Brock's successors did not have his acumen, talent for leadership and determination.

Shortly after the Americans declared war on Great Britain on 18 June 1812, the British government conditionally withdrew the Orders in Council, which were the ostensible cause for the declaration of war. Hoping that President Madison would rescind his decision to fight, Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, the governor in chief of Upper and Lower Canada, approached Major General Henry Dearborn, commander of the American Northern Department, with a proposal for a temporary armistice. Until President Madison had time to reconsider his position, opposing commanders along the international border signed tentative armistices: the armistice on the Niagara frontier extended from 20 August 1812 to 4 September 1812, when Madison refused to ratify it.[2]

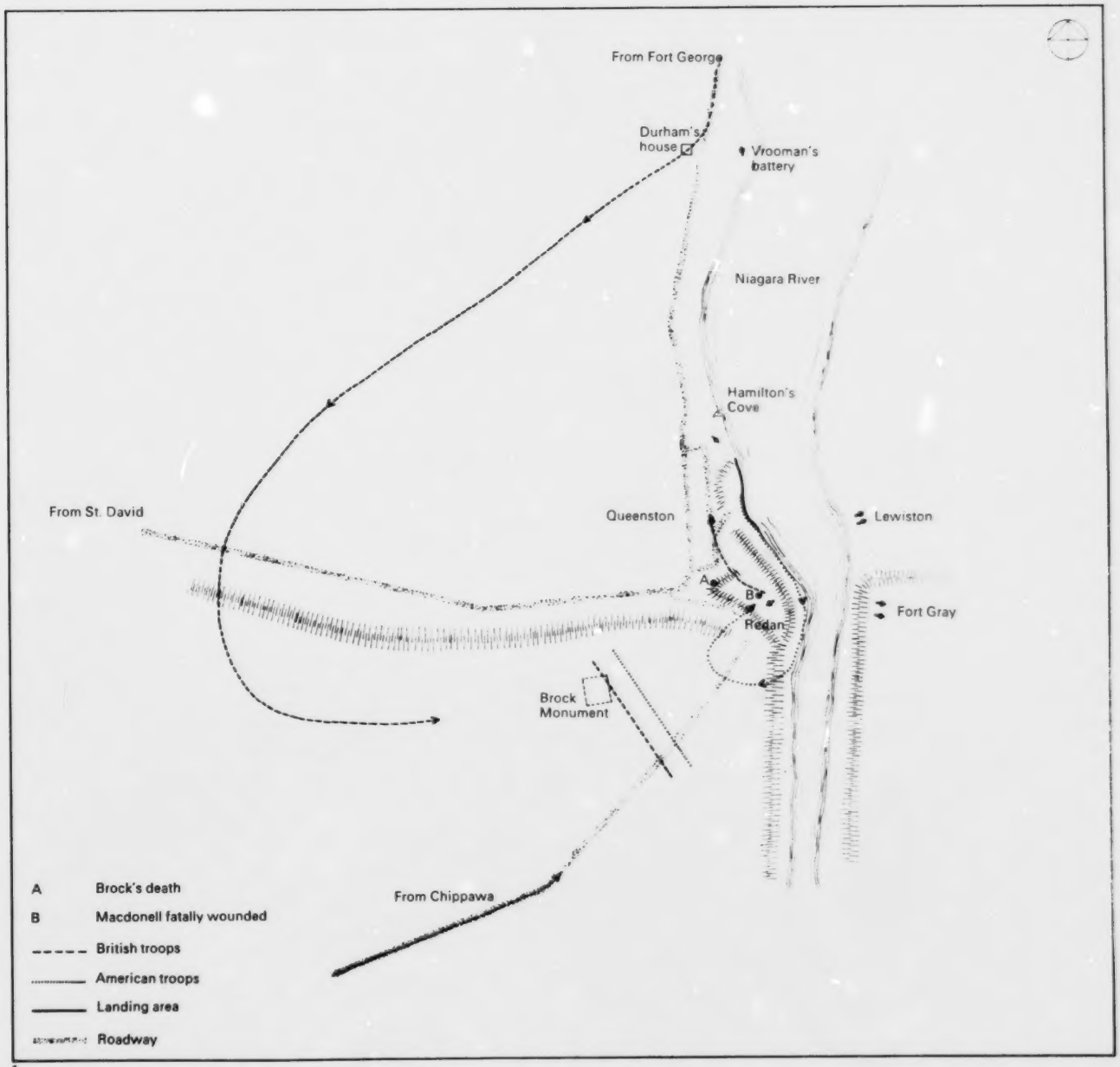
However, an attack by the Americans along the Niagara River had been contemplated earlier in the summer of 1812. On 15 August, the American secretary of war, Eustis, wrote to his subordinate, General Dearborn,

Considering the urgency of a diversion in favor of General Hull under the circumstances attending his situation, the President thinks it proper that not a moment should be lost in gaining possession of the British posts at Niagara and Kingston, or at least the former, and proceeding in co-operation with General Hull in securing Upper Canada.[3]

Despite this attitude of his superiors, the American general on the Niagara frontier, Stephen Van Rensselaer, hesitated to attack, claiming his force was too small. Writing to Tompkins, the governor of New York and the man who had appointed him, Van Rensselaer worried, "At present we rest upon the armistice, but should hostilities be recommenced I must immediately change my position. I receive no reinforcements of men, no ordnance or munitions of war."[4] The Americans used the armistice to bring supplies and cannon by water from Oswego to Van Rensselaer's forces on the Niagara River: six regiments of regular infantry, five regiments of militia, a battalion of rifles and several batteries of artillery arrived at the Niagara frontier.[5] Nevertheless Van Rensselaer still delayed attacking after the armistice was cancelled. He did call a council of war to discuss plans for a simultaneous invasion at Fort George and Queenston but General Smyth, who commanded the American forces at Buffalo, seemed to resent having anything to do with a militia officer and ignored the invitation.[6]

This lack of co-operation should have ended the proposed invasion,

1 Sketch of the battlefield at Queenston Heights.



1

but on the ninth of October, Lieutenant Elliot captured two British brigs, the *Caledonia* and *Detroit*, which were anchored off Fort Erie. Before nightfall the Americans burned the *Detroit* to foil a British attempt to recapture her.[7] This partial success so raised the desire of the American militia for a fight that Van Rensselaer claimed in a letter to Dearborn after the Battle of Queenston Heights:

In the mean time, the partial success of lieut. Elliott, at Black Rock,... began to excite a strong disposition in the troops to act. This was expressed to me through various channels in the shape of an alternative: that they must have orders to act; or at all hazards, they would go home.[8]

Lieutenant Colonel Evans and Major Merritt both relate incidents of Americans firing their muskets at the British shore, an indication of the Americans' impatience for battle.[9]

Hence Van Rensselaer altered his plans and decided to attack just at Queenston. An attempt was made during the early hours of 11 October. Van Rensselaer entrusted the first crossing to Lieutenant Sim who, upon reaching the British shore slightly below the proposed landing place, abandoned the boat containing the oars of most of the other boats and disappeared. This apparent desertion and a heavy rainstorm ended the invasion for that day.[10] Brock, it appears, was aware of this abortive attempt, for that day he wrote to Sir George Prevost that there had been an attempt "to carry off the guard over the store at Queenston."[11]

The drenching they had received apparently had not dampened the clamor of the American forces for action. Therefore, on the evening of the twelfth, forces from the surrounding areas began marching to Lewiston by the back roads. Lieutenant Colonel Stranahan's force was the first to leave Niagara Falls, followed by those of Mead and Lieutenant Colonel Blan.[12]

1 And it came to pass, on the morning of the thirteenth day of the tenth month,

2 That Stephen, a chief captain of Columbia, sirnamed Van Rensselaer, essayed to cross the river which is called Niagara, with his whole army.

3 Now the river lieth between the Lake Erie and the Lake Ontario.

4 And the noise of the waters of the river is louder than the roaring of the forest; yea, it is like unto the rushing of mighty armies to battle.

5 And the movement of the stupendous falls thereof bringeth the people from all parts of the earth to behold it.

6 So Stephen gat his soldiers into the boats that were prepared for them and they moved upon the rough waters of the river, towards the strong hold of Queenstown.

7 And when the men of Britain saw them approach, they opened the engines upon them, from Fort George, and round about.

8 Nevertheless, they persevered, although the strength of the waters, which were ungovernable, separated the army.

9 However, Solomon, a captain and a kinsman of Stephen, reached the shore with the men under his command, in all two hundred.[13]

About three o'clock on the morning of 13 October 1812, the Americans began crossing the Niagara River to attack Queenston. The invading force was divided into two parts; 300 militia of the 18th Regiment under the command of Colonel Solomon Van Rensselaer, Stephen's cousin and aide-de-camp, and an equal number of regulars of the 13th Regiment led by Lieutenant Colonel Chrystie, crossed from Lewiston in approximately 12 boats, each carrying 25 men.[14] Some of the boats ferrying part of Chrystie's troops drifted too far downstream and returned to the American shore before joining Van Rensselaer's force at the landing at Queenston.[15] The landing occurred at the foot of the portage road where the government wharf and several private wharves were located.[16]

The Light and Grenadier companies of the 49th Regiment and the companies of Captains Chisholm and Hall of the York militia, in all 300 men,[17] opposed the landing from their station in Queenston. Apparently their fire was effective, for Colonel Van Rensselaer was wounded, as were all of his commissioned officers who were not killed outright. Accordingly his force took cover under the edge of the hill, where the British could not fire down upon them.

The accounts suggest that confusion at the embarkation point decreased the number of reinforcements which reached Colonel Van Rensselaer at this time. The forces led by Lieutenant Colonel Fenwick and Lieutenant Phelps of the 13th Reg-

2 The Battle of Queenston Heights by Major Dennis. Dennis, then captain of the 49th Regiment stationed at Queenston, did this illustration years later, combining all of the incidents of the battle. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

2

iment, Lieutenant Clark of the 23rd Regiment, Lieutenant Bailey of the 3rd Artillery, and Lieutenant Turner of the 13th Infantry, who did try to assist Van Rensselaer, landed at Hamilton's Cove, where they were immediately seized by some militia and a few regulars of the 49th Regiment. These prisoners were marched off, under guard, to Fort George, seven miles away at Niagara.[18]

American reinforcements were slightly hampered by the fire of the British guns located in the Queenston area. One 24-pounder, *en barbette*, was located at Vrooman's Battery, one mile north of Queenston. The British field artillery at Queenston amounted to two 3-pounders, known as "grasshoppers." A second large cannon, an 18-pounder, was located in a redan battery half way up the mountain (Fig. 1). From this location it could fire upon the American battery, Fort Gray, which was directly opposite, or upon the river, or the village of Queenston beneath it. Fort Gray was armed with two 18-pounders and two 6-pounders under the direction of Major Lovett. Lieutenant Colonel Winfield Scott of the 2nd American Artillery positioned the two 6-pounders, which he had brought from Niagara Falls, on the Lewiston shore.[19]

Brock, who was sleeping at his headquarters at Fort George, was awakened by the fire of these batteries. He immediately set out for Queenston to ascertain whether or not this was the real American assault or just a feint to cover an attack upon Fort George from the opposing Fort Niagara. On the way he passed Lieutenant Jarvis, who had been dispatched to inform him of the attack. This fact suggests that in their haste the commanders at Queenston forgot to use Brock's elaborate system of beacons and telegraphs, which stretched from Sugar Loaf and Point Albino to Queenston and inland to Pelham Heights.[20]

Brock paused briefly on his way to Queenston to order Captain Cameron's and Captain Heward's detachments of the 3rd York militia, who were stationed at Brown's Point Battery, to follow him.[21] It seems likely that here, if anywhere, Brock shouted the famous order "Push on the brave York Volunteers!" Upon reaching Queenston he went directly to the redan battery where he could get a better view of the battle. Seeing the difficulties that Captain Dennis's Grenadier Company was having in resisting the invaders, Brock ordered most of Captain Williams' Light Company, which was posted on the heights, to descend and assist them.[22] He also noted the size of the force gathered at Lewiston to embark, and realized that the attack upon Queenston was the real assault. Brock, therefore, dispatched orders to Fort George and Chippawa for reinforcements and artillery to advance to Queenston.

10 And he put the army in battle array, in a valley, and moved up towards the strong hold; and Brock was the chief captain of the host of Britain.
11 And from their strong hold they shot, with their mischievous engines, balls of lead in abundance; and it was as a shower of hail upon the people of Columbia;
12 For there was no turning to the right hand nor to the left for safety.
13 And Solomon and his men fought hard; and they rushed into the hottest of the battle.
14 And a captain of the United States, whose name was Chrystie, followed close after them, with a chosen band of brave men.
15 So they pushed forward to the strong hold, and drove the men of Britain before them like sheep, and smote them hip and thigh with great slaughter; and Brock, their chief captain, was among the slain.
16 And Chrystie, and the valiant Wool, and Ogilvie, and the host of Columbia, got into the hold, and the army of the king fled: and Chrystie was wounded in the palm of his hand.
17 But Solomon was sorely wounded, so that his strength failed him, and he went not into the hold.[23]

Meanwhile one of Colonel Van Rensselaer's officers suggested a way by which the Americans could move from the landing where they were pinned down by the British fire. Accordingly, about 60 Americans, including Captains Wool and Ogilvie, Lieutenants Kearney, Hugouin, Carr and Simmons of the 43rd Regiment, Lieutenants Ganesvoort and Randolph of the Light Artillery, and Major Lush of the militia, began edging their way south along the river, keeping under the cover of the escarpment so their movement was not detected (Fig. 1). They eased along the river's edge until

they came to a narrow path which led to the top of the escarpment. The exact location of this path is unknown but apparently it was to the right of the redan battery, for this flanking movement was not spotted. The Americans gained the heights unopposed because Brock, who had been informed the path could not be scaled, had not posted a guard.[24]

As soon as the American force was collected on the heights, in the approximate location of the present Queenston Heights Restaurant, they cheered and charged down upon the small British force in the redan battery. Brock heard the attackers as he turned to give directions to the bombardier of Captain Williams' Light Company of the 49th Regiment. The British just had time to spike the gun before fleeing to the village below (Fig. 1).[25]

At this time, the Americans controlled the landing area and the escarpment while the British had possession of the rest of the village. Recognizing that the best chance to dislodge the Americans from their position was to move before they had a chance to organize or consolidate, Brock quickly assembled all available troops to try to retake the redan, gathering them behind the stone fence at the southern edge of the village. At a signal from the major general, they jumped the wall and started up toward the redan on the American left. Brock was in the forefront. As he approached the crest of the redan, a marksman stepped out from behind a tree and fired at the leader in his distinctive uniform and flowing scarf, a gift from the admiring Tecumseh. Brock died immediately (Fig. 1). While his followers gathered round his corpse, one of the soldiers fell dead across his body, which was then taken back to Queenston and secreted in a house.[26]

Brock's death, therefore, occurred somewhere to the southeast of the location of a marker in Queenston which proclaims that near this spot he was killed.

18 And that day there fell of the servants of the king many valiant men, even those who were called Invincibles, and had gained great honour in Egypt.[27]

Lieutenant Colonel John Macdonell, Brock's provincial aide-de-camp, had followed Brock to Queenston, and now assembled a force of less than 100 men of the 49th Regiment and Captain Cameron's company of the 3rd York militia to attack the redan. Various reports indicate that his force gained the redan, nearly captured the gun, and were firing upon the 300 Americans, who were being slowly driven back up the mountain.[28] It seemed at this point that the British had a chance of recovering the redan battery. Unfortunately two incidents intervened before the British could secure their position. The American commander, Wool, was reinforced and the British commander, Macdonell, was mortally wounded by a bullet in the back. Captain Williams of the 49th was also wounded and the small British force retreated into the village. A few of the wounded were taken prisoner.[29] Probably the American reinforcements, which arrived at the opportune moment, consisted of detachments under Captains Gibson, McChesney, and Lawrence, and Colonels Mead, Stranahan, and Allen.[30]

The British retreated to Hamilton's house, a large stone building encircled by a stone fence. Early in the afternoon Captain Holcroft of the Royal Artillery brought up a howitzer from Fort George and stationed it in Hamilton's courtyard. Here the British force was pinned down after Lieutenants Ganesvoort and Randolph, assisted by a detachment of American artillery, drilled the captured redan gun and turned it upon the village.[31]

Nevertheless, Captain Holcroft, ably assisted by the wounded Alexander Hamilton, a member of the Niagara Dragoons and a resident of Queenston, and by part of Major Merritt's company of Niagara Dragoons, began to fire upon the enemy boats crossing from Lewiston. Elsewhere Lieutenant Crowther of the 41st set up two small guns, presumably the grasshoppers. The combined fire was so effective that the crossing, which had previously been relatively easy, was now so hazardous that few Americans would even attempt to cross. Their commander later blamed his failure to maintain his position in Queenston on the fact that the American militia would not cross the river.[32]

Before Holcroft's guns were brought into play, General Van Rensselaer, on the advice of Lieutenant Colonel Chrystie, who had crossed back to the American side to advise the general of the situation, ordered one light 6-pounder and its travelling carriage to be taken across.[33] He also ordered Lieutenant Totten of the Engineers to

fortify the American position at Queenston. There is no evidence that any fortifications were erected either in the redan battery or on the mountain top. Lieutenant Colonel Chrystie blamed the failure to fortify the American position on the fact that no entrenching tools were forwarded to Lieutenant Totten. Once these orders were given, General Van Rensselaer crossed over to assume personal command, accompanied by detachments of the 6th, 13th and 23rd Infantry under Lieutenant Colonel Chrystie and Major Mullany as well as by a small detachment of militia under Brigadier General Wadsworth. Captain Wool was ordered to return to Lewiston to have his wounds dressed.[34]

Thus the position at Queenston was at a standstill. Once Holcroft had set up his guns, few Americans could cross to reinforce their comrades because Holcroft's guns were sinking a number of boats. On the other hand, the British could not readily move from the remains of Hamilton's house because the Americans had turned the redan gun upon them.

19 Nevertheless, the same day a mighty host of savages and soldiers of the king, came forth again to battle, and rushed upon the people of the United States, and drove them from the strong hold of Queenstown.[35]

British reinforcements, which would ultimately break the deadlock, were on the way. As soon as Brock had recognized that the assault at Queenston was not a feint but the primary attack, he had dispatched orders for reinforcements from Fort George and Chippawa. Brock's successor, Major General Roger Hale Sheaffe, advanced on the road to Queenston with a large detachment of the 41st Regiment commanded by Captain Derenzy; approximately 120 Indians led by Captain John Norton and John Brant; Captain James Crook's and Captain John McEwen's companies of the 1st Lincoln; Captain Abraham Nelles' company of the 4th Lincoln led by Lieutenant Butler; Captain W. Crook's company of the 4th Lincoln; Captains Hall's, Curand's and Applegarth's companies of the 5th Lincoln; Captain Thomas Selby's company of the 1st York led by Lieutenant Vanderburgh and a Captain Burns; plus Major Merritt's company of Niagara Dragoons, and a coloured company led by Captain Runchey.[36] Instead of entering the village and attempting to recover the redan in the way that had been unsuccessful twice previously, Sheaffe veered off to the west at Durham's farm, after ordering all but a skeleton force from Queenston to join him.[37]

This movement was very frustrating to the American forces who had watched the British reinforcements approach Queenston and had planned to scatter them with cannon fire from Fort Gray. Sheaffe's flanking movement, however, took his force out of range and brought it to a cleft where the escarpment could be scaled much more easily. This cleft, known as "Sheaffe's pass," is now marked by a sign along the side of the road to St. David.

The Indians, under Captain Norton and John Brant, scaled the escarpment more quickly than the British regulars and militia, who were much more encumbered by their equipment and who had to form in line once they attained the heights. The Indians moved quickly toward the river. They drove in a picket of American militia who, when routed, carried their panic back to the main body of Americans. Lieutenant Colonel Winfield Scott, to whom Brigadier General Wadsworth of the militia had given the command, prevented a general rout by assembling a small force and driving the Indians back into the woods.[38] The Americans did not pursue the Indians but returned to the cleared section on the brow of the escarpment around the site of what is now Fort Drummond, where they were at less of a disadvantage.[39] The accounts differ as to the number of times the Indians charged and were driven back. It appears, however, that the Indian attacks, although unsuccessful in driving the Americans from the heights, further discouraged any reinforcements from crossing over. The fear of the American militia increased once it became known that Indians were among the British forces. "But the name of Indian, or the sight of the wounded, or the devil, or something else petrified them. Not a regiment, not a company, scarcely a man would go."[40]

General Sheaffe's forces joined the Indians in the edge of the woods but did not attack until the detachment

from Chippawa arrived. This consisted of Captain Bullock's company of the 41st Regiment and Captain R. Hamilton's and Captain Row's flank companies of the 2nd Lincoln militia.[41] They had marched from Chippawa along the portage road, which was set back from the edge of the Niagara gorge. As it neared Queenston, the portage road veered toward the river (Fig. 1).

When this detachment joined Sheaffe's force, the British line of battle from right to left consisted of the detachment from Chippawa along the road, a party of militia, the 49th Regiment in the centre, another party of militia from Fort George, the Light Company of the 41st Regiment and the Indians on the extreme left at the edge of the escarpment. Captain Hall's company was held in reserve.

20 For, lo ! Stephen, the chief captain, could not prevail on the hosts of militia on the other side of the river to cross over.
21 So the army of Columbia moved down towards the river to cross over again, that they might escape.
22 But when they came down to the water side, lo ! they were deceived, for there was not a boat to convey them to a place of safety ; so they became captives to the men of Britain.
23 Now the men of Britain treated the prisoners kindly, and showed much tenderness towards them ; for which the people blessed them.
24 And the killed and wounded of the host of Columbia, were an hundred two score and ten.
25 And the prisoners that fell into the hands of the king, were about seven hundred.
26 Nevertheless, in a letter which Stephen sent to Henry, the chief captain of the army of the north, he gave honor unto the captains who fought under him that day.
27 And the names of the valiant men, who distinguished themselves in the battle, were Wadsworth, Van Rensselaer, Scott, Chrystie, Fink, Gibson, and many other brave men of war.[42]

The attack began on the left flank. Lieutenant McIntyre led some of the 41st, a detachment of militia, including Captain Runchey's coloured company and the Indians, in a volley followed by a bayonet charge which drove in the American right. The rest of the line was then ordered to front and attack. Finally the militia charged.[43]

The opposing American line was drawn up with the village in the rear, the river on their left and the woods on the edge of the escarpment on their right (Fig. 1). A volunteer party of militia and regulars under Lieutenant Smith was deployed in these woods.[44]

Meanwhile General Van Rensselaer, who had crossed back over to Lewiston to try and persuade the lagging militia to join their comrades, witnessed the British flanking movement and sent General Wadsworth a note recommending retreat and promising to cover a retreat with the guns at Fort Gray and to send all the boats he could muster. The note, however, left Wadsworth discretionary powers to stand and fight if he felt he had a chance.[45] This left Wadsworth in a quandary so he called a council of war of his fellow officers, which did not reach a decision.[46] Their situation was desperate. Instead of receiving reinforcements, the men were deserting ; some had even clambered into the boat that carried General Van Rensselaer back to Lewiston. There were very few rounds of ammunition left for the one small gun. Retreat, the only viable manoeuvre, would be difficult with troops as untrained, undisciplined, and frightened, as the American militia were. Nevertheless General Wadsworth ordered a retreat, but at the same time (approximately 3 :00 P.M.) General Sheaffe ordered the final attack and the British began advancing, driving the Americans back from their position behind a stone fence toward the edge of the cliff.[47] Some in their fear leaped off, while others raced down in the hope of finding a boat to carry them back to Lewiston.[48] Since General Van Rensselaer had not sent any boats, presumably because the boatmen had disappeared, many tried to hide along the precipice where the Indians ferreted them out later. The fighting

lasted for half an hour before Lieutenant Colonel Winfield Scott raised a handkerchief on the tip of his sword and Brigadier General Wadsworth presented his sword to Sheaffe.[49]

The fighting of the thirteenth of October was not limited to the Queenston area : incidents also occurred at Fort George and Fort Erie.

When Brock galloped out of Fort George on his horse, Alfred, he left instructions for General Sheaffe to start bombarding the opposing Fort Niagara. This duty was at first entrusted to Captain Holcroft who, however, was short of artillerymen. He gathered a few from the militia to assist him and applied for men and gunpowder to a Captain Richardson, who had brought a vessel into Niagara harbour. The gunpowder was particularly useful as some of the supply at Fort George had been in the magazine since the American Revolution and did not carry the shot across the river when fired.[50]

Shortly after Major General Sheaffe and Captain Holcroft left for Queenston, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Evans succeeded in silencing the guns at Fort Niagara. Evans was assisted by Captain Vigoureux of the Royal Engineers, Colonel Claus and Captains Powell and Cameron of the 3rd Lincoln and 3rd York respectively. When the British fire began and a 12-pounder at Fort Niagara burst, the American commander, Captain Leonard, decided to abandon it. The Americans later returned to the fort and poured red-hot shot upon Fort George and the town of Niagara. The court house and the jail were gutted. Fortunately the prisoners in the jail had been safely moved to the blockhouse. The Americans also set fire to the magazine which contained 800 barrels of powder. Quick action by some soldiers extinguished this fire. The American battery was finally silenced.[51]

South of the falls it was the British who kept the Americans busy dousing fires. As soon as he learned of the fighting at Queenston, Lieutenant Colonel Myers, the Deputy Quartermaster General and commanding officer at Fort Erie, began firing upon the Americans at Black Rock. Spotting the Americans moving some gunpowder, the British turned their guns upon the magazine, and bombardier Walker of the Royal Artillery succeeded in blowing it up : a number of persons died in the explosion. The British also blew up the recently captured *Caledonia*. Finally Myers' detachment of the 49th Regiment under Major Ormsby, assisted by militia officers Captain Kirby and Lieutenant Bryson, silenced the guns at Black Rock.[52]

Thus the day ended successfully for the British. They had taken 925 prisoners including one brigadier general, one aide-de-camp, 5 lieutenant colonels, 3 majors, 19 captains and 32 lieutenants. The British estimated the American loss in killed, drowned and wounded at 500,[53] while General Van Rensselaer wrote that, "the slaughter of our troops must have been very considerable."[54] The British estimate is probably too high. The Americans also lost an iron 6-pounder with its travelling carriage and 435 French carbine muskets, plus a stand of New York militia colours.[55]

On the other hand, the British losses were slight ; 14 dead, 77 wounded and 21 missing. Unfortunately the British losses included Major General Isaac Brock, a soldier of considerable resolution and tenacity. Some of the American accounts indicate that they felt their heavy losses were partially compensated by Brock's death.[56]

Some have claimed that Brock would never have agreed to the armistice that Sheaffe signed with General Van Rensselaer after the battle of Queenston Heights. These writers feel that Brock would have seized the opportunity to cross the border, capture Fort Niagara and banish the Stars and Stripes from the Niagara frontier. Had he lived, this is probably what Brock would have wanted to do. In a letter to his brothers, he had expressed his feelings on this point : *My instructions oblige me to adopt defensive measures. I have evinced greater forbearance than ever was practised on any former occasion. I firmly believe I could at this moment sweep every thing before me between fort Niagara and Buffaloe.*[57] Nevertheless, given repeated instructions from Prevost not to attack, Brock would probably have foreborne further action. Prevost was aware not only of the limited resources of Great Britain for an offensive war but also of the possibility that an attack would unite divided American public opinion behind the war effort. He therefore

forbade offensive measures and even went so far as to mildly censure Brock for his activities on the Detroit frontier.[58] Had Prevost been commander of Upper Canada, the situation at the end of 1812 would probably have been radically different.

Although the war went on for two more years, the worst danger to Upper Canada had passed in 1812. In that year, when the British forces were so small and the morale of the population so low, the Americans had their great opportunity. That they failed to profit by it was due partly to their own unpreparedness, but to a large extent also it was due to Isaac Brock.[59]

The Battle of Queenston Heights was the decisive point. If the Americans had succeeded or if the British forces had fallen apart after Brock's death, Upper Canada would probably have been overthrown.

As a number of biographies which adequately relate the events of Isaac Brock's life have been published, this report will merely summarize his early life and emphasize his career in British North America as a soldier and administrator of the government of Upper Canada. For more information on Brock's military exploits in England, the West Indies, Holland and Denmark, the reader is referred to *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock*, by Ferdinand Brock Tupper.

"The Hero of Upper Canada" has so seldom been looked at through eyes which were not misted with nationalistic tears that an accurate judgment of his career is difficult to ascertain. This report is an attempt to examine his faults as well as his genius.

On 6 October 1769, a son was born to John Brock and his wife, Elizabeth Delisle Brock, in St. Peter's Port, Guernsey. Seven days later he was baptized Isaac. The eleventh of fourteen children, Isaac Brock could trace his parentage back to Sir Hugh Brock, defender of Guernsey in the 14th century and Sir John Delisle, its governor in 1405. The family belonged to the upper ranks of Guernsey society.[1]

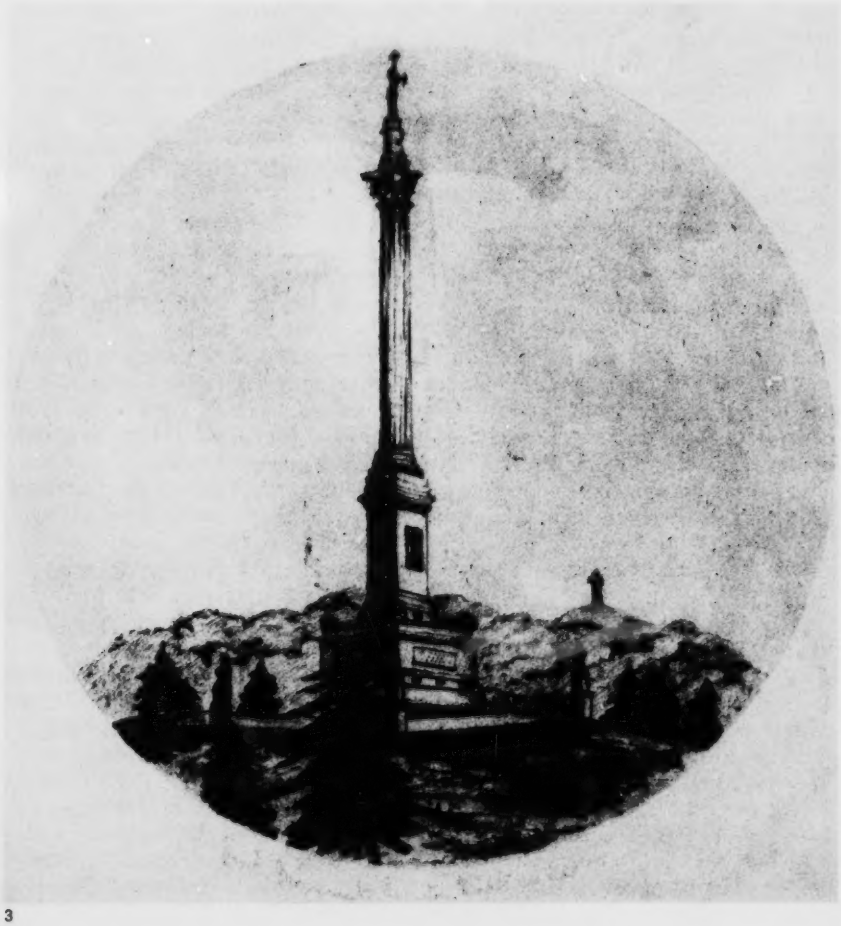
Isaac's education began in Guernsey but at 11 years of age he was sent to Southampton for several years' schooling. A year in Rotterdam learning French from a French Protestant clergyman finished the boy's education.

On 2 March 1785, Isaac purchased the commission of ensign in the 8th or King's Regiment, in which his oldest brother John held the rank of captain. Five years later he was a lieutenant in the same regiment, which was quartered in the Channel Islands at that time. His energy was soon displayed and promptly rewarded: for recruiting enough men to complete a company he was given its command.[2]

He soon left the 8th Regiment by availing himself of the opportunity of exchange by purchase into the 49th Regiment which, in 1791, was quartered in Barbados. In 1793 the regiment moved on to Jamaica, but Isaac was shortly forced to apply for sick leave and return to England. Here he utilized his earlier experience in recruiting for the benefit of the 49th, and was placed in charge of a group of recruits stationed in Jersey. Although he purchased his majority on 24 June 1795,[3] he remained in charge of the recruits until the 49th returned to England the following year.

Brock was fortunate for, throughout his career, promotions were achieved quickly. The senior lieutenant colonel of the 49th became involved in some deals of dubious legality and was forced to sell out or face a court martial. On 25 October 1797, Brock purchased the rank of lieutenant colonel. Unfortunately the regiment was badly disorganized and demoralized, but by the time it sailed for Holland on 26 August 1799, Brock had done much to repair morale and discipline. The Duke of York commented at the time that "out of one of the worst regiments in the service Colonel Brock had made the 49th one of the best."[4]

3 The Brock monument, Queenston Heights, by Lieutenant J. C. Clarke. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



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During the expedition against Holland under Sir Ralph Abercrombie, Brock first experienced battle. At Egmont-op-Zee or Bergen on 2 October, he distinguished himself but was almost killed: a thick scarf around his neck deflected the bullet.[5]

Brock's next battle experience was the attack on Copenhagen in April, 1801, under Lord Nelson. As second in command of the land forces, it was Brock's responsibility to attack the principal Treckoner or Crown Battery. The attack never became practical because the battery was not first silenced by the British navy, as had been planned.[6]

A year later the 49th sailed for Canada. Lieutenant Colonel Brock's division arrived at Quebec City on 20 August 1802. The second division of the regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Roger Hale Sheaffe arrived a month later, followed shortly by the last division under Captain Plenderleath.[7]

The regiment was soon ordered to Upper Canada, Brock commanding a group at York and Sheaffe in charge of the rest at Fort George. Here Brock faced the problem of all regiments quartered in sparsely settled country: desertion. The rigours of army life and the proximity of the border induced many to attempt escape. Early in 1803, six soldiers deserted from York but were apprehended by the prompt action of Brock, who followed them to Niagara in an open boat.[8] A second desertion attempt was much more serious. Sheaffe, according to Brock, *has shown great zeal, judgment, and capacity. His manner of addressing*

the men on the least irritation, must be allowed to be unfortunate, and to that failing must be attributed, in a great measure, the ill will which some men have expressed towards him. There is also another cause which ought not to be omitted – Whenever the Command of the Regiment devolved by any absence on Colonel Sheaffe, he, unquestionably, required more from the non commissioned officers, than I knew was useless to expect from them.[9]

These faults in Sheaffe's character led to discontent among the soldiers which erupted in a conspiracy to mutiny and desert in the summer of 1803. Fortunately Sheaffe became suspicious and sent for Brock, who arrived quietly and soon had the ringleaders under guard. Three of the would-be deserters were shot and eleven were transported to Barbados. It is claimed that Brock wept openly while reading the account of the execution to the troops. Certainly he was depressed at the thought of misguided men dying.[10]

Brock recommended that Sheaffe be left in charge at Fort George arguing that for him to be moved elsewhere would be not only humiliating but also detrimental to his position as an officer, and that he had learned from his near fatal mistakes. Nevertheless this wise counsel was ignored and Brock replaced Sheaffe at Fort George, moving to Quebec City the following year.[11]

In October, 1805, Brock became a full colonel and was granted leave to return to England.[12] There he placed before the commander in chief a recommendation for a veteran battalion to serve in Upper Canada. This document shows how much the desertions had affected him, for he states,

A Regiment quartered in Upper Canada is generally divided into eight different parts, several hundred miles asunder, and in this situation it remains for at least three years. Great as is the evil incidental to a state of separation, even where the mind is in no danger of being debauched, what may not be apprehended in a country where both the divided state of the regiment, and the artifices employed to wean the Soldier from his duty, conspire to render almost ineffectual every effort of the Officers to maintain the usual degree of order and discipline. The lures to desertion continually thrown out by the Americans, and the facility with which it can be accomplished, exacting a more than ordinary precaution on the part of the officers, insensibly produce mistrust between them and the men highly prejudicial to the service.[13]

To prevent further desertions, Colonel Brock recommended the formation of a veteran battalion consisting of retired soldiers. Their length of service in Upper Canada would be in inverse proportion to their length of service in the regular army; that is, a veteran of 25 years would serve 3 years in Canada while a veteran of less than 10 years would serve 10 years.

Brock argued that these veterans would be staid, loyal, and unlikely to desert as, at the end of their service in Upper Canada, they would be given 200 acres of virgin land in the colony. An added inducement to the proposal would be the resultant group of loyal, trained settlers who would counteract those "known only as our enemies in the war of the rebellion," who had settled in Upper Canada but were not loyal to His Royal Highness. Brock would always be disturbed by this "great influx of bad men into the Country" which "must long be productive of serious evils to the army."[14]

Superficially Brock's proposal seemed excellent. However he failed to consider that men who had served 20 years or more in the army would not likely be fit to homestead or know anything about farming. Furthermore, those who served the least amount of time before being posted to Upper Canada, where they would have to serve 10 years, were the least likely to be loyal and might easily be induced to desert. Ten years might seem a long time to serve when just the Niagara River lay between you and freedom.

The commander in chief, after thanking him, took Brock's proposal under consideration. Shortly afterwards, the 10th Royal Veteran Battalion, a unit organized on similar principles, was posted to British North America.

4 Sir Isaac Brock.
(*Public Archives of Canada.*)

On 26 June 1806, Brock left England on board the *Lady Saumarez.*[15] This was his last glimpse of his homeland and beloved brothers for, despite frequent pleas for leave of absence, his duties in British North America detained him until his death.

Although only a colonel he became, upon his return, the senior military officer commanding in the colonies succeeding Colonel Bowes of the 6th Regiment.[16] His zeal and activity in this new position of responsibility were phenomenal, leading him, however, into frequent quarrels with the administrators of Lower Canada.

One of the first problems to attract the young colonel's attention was the dilapidated state of defences in his headquarters, Quebec. The city's fortifications had not received any attention since the administrations of Sir Guy Carleton and Sir Robert Prescott.[17] Concerned by the hostile attitude of the United States in consequence of the Chesapeake affair,[18] Brock began to give serious consideration to the defence of Lower Canada. Writing to Thomas Dunn, President Administering the Government of Lower Canada in the absence of the governor, Brock stated,

Quebec the only military post in this country, is in no condition of making much defence against an active enemy. The walls by which it is enclosed on the Western side are very old and much

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decayed, and could not possibly for any continuance sustain a heavy fire. The works along the whole of that Front are so completely uncovered that the first Shot might strike the Wall from a short distance of 600 yards, at its very base.

My object is to throw up such works as will remedy this glaring defect, but the Garrison is totally inadequate to such a heavy undertaking. I therefore presume to state my wants with the full confidence of meeting that Support and assistance from the Civil Government as the exigencies of the case evidently require.[19]

Brock's full confidence was not met. When he asked that 600 to 1,000 militia be embodied for a period of 6 weeks to 2 months and that he be supplied with a large number of carts, the Executive Council informed him that their power was limited to mobilizing a small proportion of the militia from the whole province. This power had been used only once previously and on that occasion some had failed to serve. They expected similar problems if the militia was again assembled. They further notified Brock that, under the Militia Act, the members of the embodied militia were entitled to the same pay and allowances as the regulars but that the civil government lacked the funds to pay them. The council also stated that in the past such funds had always been provided by the Commander of the Forces. In addition they wanted to know if the essential materials could be provided without encroaching upon private property.[20]

Brock took immediate offence at the information and question placed before him. He addressed Dunn on the subject.

In thus complying with the dictates of his duty Colonel Brock was not prepared to hear that the population of the Province, instead of affording him ready and effectual Support might probably add to the number of his Enemies, and feels much disappointment in being informed by the first authority, that the only Law in any degree calculated to answer the end proposed was likely, if attempted to be enforced, to meet with such general opposition as to require the aid of the Military to give it even a momentary impulse.[21]

Brock did recover from his displeasure sufficiently to suggest that he expected most of the militia would willingly come to his assistance in an emergency.[22] At a subsequent meeting the Executive Council sought to reassure Brock that they had not meant to imply that the whole militia would refuse to serve but that some "defaulters" might be found.[23] The problem of Quebec's defences was not yet solved.

The Executive Council next proposed to Colonel Brock that he make use of the means employed previously to repair the fortifications, "employing the regular Troops together with hired Artificers and Labourers." The council also noted that Brock had failed to comment upon the most important issue : Who was to pay for the repairs ? Dunn claimed that the funds of the provincial treasury were insufficient to meet ordinary expenses.[24]

At this time the argument with the Executive Council on the repairs to the citadel was dropped, and all subsequent correspondence with that body related solely to embodying the militia if the colony was invaded. Late in August the militia was mobilized with very few dissenters. Previously Colonel Brock had agreed to supply arms for any number, up to 5,000 men, who were assembled and instructed.[25]

Brock later used British army resources to improve the defences of Quebec City. A large battery of eight 36-pounders was raised in the centre of the citadel where it could command the opposite heights.[26]

The fortifications of Quebec City were not the only issue upon which the commanding officer clashed with the civil administration. They also disagreed about paying the Indian Department and the use of the Jesuits' Gardens.

The problem with the Indian Department accounts arose because the department's expenses were paid by the army, although it was under the "sole Control of the Person exercising the Government of the Province." Brock, in accordance with what he understood to be the instructions from England, wished the accounts to be transferred to the civil administration, knowing that eventually the army would pay them, since the civil deficit was defrayed from the army extraordinaries. Transferring the account would simplify the bookkeeping and prevent mistakes. Brock had become aware of the unwieldy situation when it was discovered that one account of long standing was still being paid

while the civil administration was under the impression it had been closed. Disagreement also arose over hiring of *batteaux* and the paying of Indian crews.[27]

The new system as initiated by Brock was simpler, but he failed to realize that the instructions he was following applied only to Upper Canada. Thomas Dunn, however, did note this fact, and was unwilling to make any changes. Writing to England, Dunn said he hoped that Brock "began to be aware of the Labyrinth into which he had got and of the probable ill consequences of suddenly overturning a System which a late Commander in Chief (Lord Dorchester) had been so many years in bringing to perfection and which the Secretary of State had so positively ordered to be continued."[28]

A student of human nature such as Brock claimed to be[29] should have been aware that an obsequious man like Dunn, in a temporary situation, would oppose all innovations. In a letter to England Dunn described himself and his position.

After having served His Majesty in different civil Capacities in this Province for upwards of Forty years it has fallen to my Lot as senior protestant Member of the Executive Council to be entrusted with the administration of this Government, a Trust which I certainly should not have solicited, though I did not think proper to decline it when it fell to me in the regular Line of my Duty. I flattered myself that with upright Intentions and the experience I had necessarily acquired in the Public Concerns of the Province, I might be able, during the temporary absence of the Governor and Lieutenant Governor to preserve the several Branches of this Administration entire, and to restore them whenever called upon so to do in the same state in which they were committed to my charge.[30]

Brock had certainly misjudged the man to whom he proposed a number of changes.

Since he was forced to withdraw gradually his instructions to the paymaster general's department and revert to the old system, Brock lost this round; however, it is an example of his continuing fight to simplify army bookkeeping. He was always most insistent that a proper warrant be presented before funds were issued. It was Brock who noticed the missing £36,350 in the accounts of the deputy commissary general. Further examination revealed that one account had not been audited since 1788 and another since 1796.[31]

The third issue that arose between President Dunn and Colonel Brock was the use of the property of the Jesuits, which was adjacent to the military barracks. The property was under the supervision of a board of commissioners which was to decide how to appropriate the estates now that the last of the order had died. Colonel Brock, acting on Dunn's verbal assurance that he would not interfere, had appropriated the extensive property for a parade ground, the original military parade ground being too small.[32]

The commissioners, however, were only willing to allow Brock temporary use of a small area of the total gardens. This drew from Brock an unwarranted and tactless comment upon the commissioners to the effect that

There are two descriptions of men in this Town, who very reluctantly see the Military occupy with so much advantage the ground heretofore totally useless, overgrown by noxious weeds, with a large Pond in the Centre full of Stagnant water, from the exhalations of which the utmost dread was entertained for the health of the Troops. The one seeing with sorrow the improvement the Military are daily making in appearance and discipline, and the other their prospect diminish of sharing in the spoil they meditated.[33]

This thoughtless remark inflamed the issue and was a direct cause of Dunn submitting the substantial correspondence on the subject to the Colonial Office for mediation. Brock later tried to claim that he had not intended to suggest that some of the commissioners were hoping to acquire wealth as a result of their position, but the purport of the remark is unmistakable. In addition, he had the gall to accuse Dunn of addressing him in a "novel and ungracious manner."[34]

Eventually sanction came from England for the army to use the Jesuits' Gardens.[35] Meanwhile the extensive correspondence revealed two facts about Brock; his concern for the welfare of his troops and his disdain for the civil administration.

5 Sir Isaac Brock.
(*Public Archives of Canada*)

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Brock was known for his attention to the welfare of the soldiers under his command, even when they were confined to jail. In the summer of 1803, Brock ordered a court martial held for two soldiers who had been imprisoned for some time. He further requested the court not to inflict the sentence, claiming that the men had already served their time. A year later, worried that two prisoners were not getting sufficient air and exercise, he converted a larger building into a jail.[36]

Perhaps it was fortunate that the new governor general and commander in chief, Sir James Craig, arrived in the fall of 1807, superseding Brock as senior officer commanding and relieving Brock from contact with the civil administration. He did not have any more business with civilians in authority until a year before his death, when he assumed the position of president administering the government of Upper Canada.

Meanwhile there were compensations for being relieved of the command of the troops. Sir James Craig appointed him brigadier general; an appointment which was confirmed as of 2 June 1808. He was also transferred to Montreal.[37]

The next few years were very frustrating ones for Brock. An ambitious man, he felt he was wasting away while promotions were being earned on the battlefields of Europe. A letter to his brothers expressed his feelings. *I rejoice Savery has begun to exert himself to get me appointed to a more active situation. I must see service, or I may as well, and indeed much*

better, quit the army at once, for no one advantage can I reasonably look to hereafter if I remain buried in this inactive, remote corner, without the least mention being made of me.[38]

Brock's desire to return to England became much more urgent in the fall of 1811. Financial problems had beset his brothers and he was impatient to know what was happening and what he could do to alleviate the poverty and heal the dissension. His brother William was co-owner of a London bank in which Irving, another brother, was employed. The bank was forced to declare bankruptcy due to the losses resulting from a number of vessels having been captured on the Baltic Sea.[39] The bankruptcy of one brother affected the rest of the family. Irving, left poor and unemployed, blamed William. Savery Brock also lost money in the bank's collapse. Most important, however, was the financial dependence of the whole family upon William. Isaac had been given the money to purchase his commissions by William. Although William had no intention of ever collecting these gifts, it was entered upon the firm's books that Isaac Brock had received loans totalling more than £3,000. Part of Isaac's distress was undoubtedly due to the worry about whether or not he would be compelled to sell his commission to repay the loan. Apparently the bank's creditors decided not to collect this debt since Isaac heard no more about it.

Upon learning of the family disaster, Brock disguised his personal apprehensions when he wrote:
I have at length heard from you. To what a sad state of misery are we fallen – poverty I was prepared to hear, but poor unfortunate William! Remember his kindness to me. What pleasure he always found in doing me kindness. Oh! my dear brother let all unite in relieving the sorrows of the best heart heaven ever formed. I can well conceive that the circumstances which led to his ruin, were excited by a too ardent wish to place us all in affluence. His wealth we were sure to divide. I shall write to him the instant I feel sufficiently composed. Could tears restore him he would soon be happy. Savery says Daniel is involved. To what degree? Good God, why this torture? and the last thing that gives me any concern is the necessity under which I may be placed to sell my commission. They would save the whole of us from starving; we might retire to some corner and be still happy. I enclose a power of attorney to enable you to receive my salary as President. I likewise enclose a letter to Mr. Gilpin (the agent) to pay you what money of mine he may have in his hands. I imagine I shall have no call upon you for three years to come; the whole of my salary, regimental pay, will therefore be at your disposal. Depend upon my exercising the utmost economy; but I am in a situation that must be upheld by a certain expense. Did it depend upon myself, how willingly would I live on bread and water. Did Savery succeed in his application for an Ensigncy for William Potenger? What will become of the girls?[40]
The offer to retrench his own expenses that he might share his salaries clearly shows Brock's devotion to his family. Later, after his victory at Detroit he wrote that he hoped to be able to contribute more to their physical comfort from his share of the prize money.[41] Given these feelings, his impatience at being separated from his family is understandable.

Meanwhile Brock had been transferred twice; from Montreal to Quebec in 1808 and then to Upper Canada in 1810. Here life was unbearably dull. He utilized some of the time to visit Detroit, acquiring, no doubt, some information which was useful two years later. The rest of his time was spent reading – mostly military history.[42]

His complaints to his brothers about boredom and the absence of any congratulatory messages discredits the contention of many secondary sources that, at this period, Isaac became engaged to Sophia Shaw, daughter of General Aeneas Shaw. The story of their last meeting, as he galloped to Queenston on 13 October 1812,[43] is so touching that it might well have been created to add the final touch to the Brock myth.

His enforced inactivity in these years – shown by the lack of information about his activities other than his own references to boredom and reading – must have increased his desire for European service. Sir James Craig was unwilling to transfer Brock when he was himself on the verge of returning to England because of ill health. In compensation, Craig sent Brock his own horse, Alfred.[44] Finally

in January of 1812, permission to return to England was granted, but Brock turned it down because

being now placed in a high ostensible situation, and the state of public affairs with the American Government indicating a strong presumption of an approaching rupture between the two Countries, I beg leave to be allowed to remain in my present command.[45]

The "high ostensible position" Brock referred to was two appointments. By 18 June 1811, he was a major general on the staff of North America, a promotion which must have partially compensated for not being transferred to the more active European theatre. The second appointment, although just as important, was achieved by default. Francis Gore, the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, returned to England on leave so Brock, as commanding military officer, assumed the presidency of the civil administration of Upper Canada on 9 October 1811.[46] The appointment facilitated decision-making, especially once war was declared. Here in one person were combined the responsibilities for both the military and civil administration of the province. The approval and support of the lieutenant governor for proposals to the legislature to assist the defence of the province was no longer necessary. One intermediary was removed. Nevertheless Brock had problems.

The first arose out of this very union of roles. Questions relating to courts martial illustrate the confusion. As president, Brock's powers over courts martial of the militia included calling them and inflicting, if necessary, the death sentence. As commanding officer, however, his powers were limited to convening courts martial of regular soldiers. Brock appealed to Prevost for advice on how to handle this discrepancy in powers: Prevost signed a warrant increasing Brock's military powers. Isaac also wanted to know whether or not militia officers could sit with regular officers upon courts martial. If they could not, declaring martial law was useless; there were so few regular commissioned officers in Upper Canada that convening a court martial with them alone would be impossible.[47]

Some of Brock's other problems related to his attitude toward civil administration and Upper Canadians. Brock had learned how to handle civilians since the imbroglio of 1807. There were no tactless comments this time about the character of the persons with whom he was working. His derogatory remarks he expressed only in private letters to Sir George Prevost. Addressing the Legislative Council for the first time on 3 February 1812, Brock referred to "a loyal and brave band of veterans" and "the loyal and virtuous inhabitants of this happy land." Similarly, speaking to the House of Assembly, he said, "I doubt not but that you will cheerfully lend your aid." However, writing to Prevost about the same time, Brock worried about "the many doubtful characters in the Militia"; and writing of a subsequent assembly he feared, "nothing material will be done." Brock was worried about "The great influence which the vast number of Settlers from the United States possess over the decisions of the Lower House." Having expressed his distrust of most Upper Canadians, Brock went on to attack the original inhabitants. Referring to the Indians he said, "They may serve to intimidate, otherwise expect no essential services from this degenerate race."[48]

The important factor was that Brock hid his opinions from the people. The general order he issued from Detroit praises the militia.

Major-General Brock has every reason to be satisfied with the conduct of the Troops he had the honor to lead this morning against the enemy. The state of discipline which they so eminently displayed, and the determination which they evinced to undertake the most hazardous enterprise, decided the enemy, infinitely more numerous in men and artillery, to propose a capitulation.[49]

The evident disparity between Brock's public statements and private sentiments indicates that he had learned not to alienate the civilians and their administration. He deserves credit for this, considering the prevailing unenthusiastic response of Upper Canadians to the war. Brock commented upon this attitude in a letter to a friend in Montreal.

The population, believe me is essentially bad. A full belief possess them all that this Province must inevitably succumb. This prepossession is fatal

to every exertion. Legislators, magistrates, militia officers, all, have imbibed the idea, and are so sluggish and indifferent in their respective offices that the artful and active scoundrel is allowed to parade the country without interruption, and commit all imaginable mischief. They are so alarmed of offending that this rather encourages than represses disorders or other proper [sic] *acts. I really believe in it with some cause they dread the vengeance of the democratic party, they are such a set of unrelenting villains.*[50]

Brock did, however, become involved in one squabble as a result of his position as president of Upper Canada. Fortunately the person with whom he quarrelled resided in Quebec City. Brock decided to ignore the bishop of Quebec's nominee for the Anglican Benefice of York. Instead he wrote Bishop Mountain recommending Doctor Strachan for the position. The quarrel arose because he offered the position to Strachan before seeking the bishop's approval. When the bishop replied to Brock, noting that the request for his approval was obviously an afterthought, Brock was insulted. The bishop then felt compelled to apologize for all unintentional "insinuations."[51] The incident shows that Brock, still unaccustomed to having his decisions questioned, was unwilling to consult with anyone except his military superior.

Since Brock had learned not to express his thoughts when speaking to civilians, it could be expected that his relations with the Upper Canadian assembly would be amicable and fruitful. Such, however, was not the case. When he addressed the first meeting of the legislature held under his auspices on 3 February 1812, Brock drew their attention to the militant attitude of the United States and asked them to consider a new militia law providing for the formation of militia flank companies. He also asked for an act to suspend *habeas corpus*.[52]

The militia bill which did pass was, according to Brock, so changed "as to defeat very materially my views." The Oath of Adjuration, which Brock had considered one of the most essential clauses to ensure the loyalty of the recent immigrants from the United States, was deleted, and the bill was to last only until the end of the next session of the legislature. The bill for the suspension of *habeas corpus* was also defeated.[53]

Since he had failed to achieve his aims from this session, Brock called another meeting after war had been declared. Of the House which assembled on 27 July, Brock wrote, "A more decent House has not been elected since the formation of the province – but I perceived at once that I shall get no good of them." He again desired an improved militia act, sanction of the legislature for the declaration of partial martial law, and extra finances.[54] The legislature was prorogued on 3 August because,

The Assembly refused to strengthen the Militia Act, to suspend partially habeas corpus, to authorize "a partial exercise of Martial Law concurrently with the ordinary course of Justice", or to give Brock monies not used from past appropriations.[55]

Meanwhile, of course, Brock was concerned with the military defence of the colony. Early in December, 1811, Brock wrote to Prevost stating his ideas about the strategy they should follow in the event of war. Brock believed that Amherstburg was the key: from here offensive operations could be launched which would hold the Americans in check and keep them on the defensive from Niagara west. The Indians would be essential to assist the British in this area but their help could not be depended upon until the British had captured Detroit and Michilimackinac. Pointing out the vital situation of Kingston, Brock advised stationing a large force of regulars and Glengarry militia there. The depleted state of the Provincial Marine drew his attention and he recommended buying and renting as many vessels as possible and building gun boats. He also wanted the Car Brigade completed for service by the addition of horses, drivers and gunners.[56]

Prevost, however, cautioned against initiating offensive measures and worried about controlling the actions of Indians fighting for the British.[57]

There was a basic difference in the strategy of the two men. Brock wanted to hold on to Upper Canada by offensive action: Prevost wanted to fight defensively, retaining Upper Canada as long as possible and then fighting a rear-guard action as the forces retreated to Quebec, the only defensible position in British North America. Holed up in the citadel, the British

forces would wait until Britain, having defeated Napoleon Bonaparte, could send aid. Then they would go on the offensive and recover Upper Canada. Brock, however, seemed to ignore Britain's struggle in Europe.

The offensive warfare which Brock advocated from December 1811 no doubt had, as its ultimate aim, the preservation of British influence in North America. But it failed to take into account the limited forces available. Active war with the United States would diverge from the main object of defeating Napoleon. Brock did not see the war in North America as an extension of an existing conflict, but as an isolated event – an act of American aggression which must immediately be defeated. His aim, in fact was unsound. His plan would also have required a concentration of forces in the most vulnerable rather than the most essential place. The main body of British forces, if in Upper Canada, would have been dependent on an exposed and weak line of communications, liable to be cut with fatal consequences at any point between Quebec and York.[58]

Brock himself seemed aware of the precarious situation he was in when he wrote to his brother that "if I should be beaten the province is inevitably gone, and should I be victorious I do not imagine the gentry from the other side will be anxious to return to the charge."[59] Nevertheless Brock persisted in his opinion that the only way to defend British North America was to go on the offensive.

Some of Brock's suggestions for the defence of Upper Canada were very wise; improving the Car Brigade and Provincial Marine was essential; however, he seems to have overrated the value of the Indians in Upper Canada. Militarily they were of dubious value, although they did have a psychological value which cannot be measured.[60]

Despite the weaknesses pointed out by his superior, Brock set about implementing his strategy once war was declared. He learned of the declaration of war on 25 June and on the 26th, following his first inclination, ordered the detachment at Fort St. Joseph to attack Michilimackinac. The next day, remembering Prevost's instructions, he rescinded the order, but the following day he wrote leaving the decision to the discretion of the commander. Prevost, meanwhile, was ordering the commander at St. Joseph, Roberts, to be cautious in defending his position.[61] The confused Roberts decided to protect himself by occupying a more defensible position, Michilimackinac. On 17 July the British, assisted by some Indians, occupied Michilimackinac.

Brock did not have an opportunity to personally implement his strategy until the attack on Detroit. Obeying Prevost's injunctions, Brock did not move against Detroit immediately after war was declared. Instead he waited until Canada was invaded by Brigadier General Hull. As soon as he had prorogued the legislature, Brock hurried to the Detroit front, to discover that Hull had retreated to Detroit. Here Brock faced a dilemma: captured letters revealed that Hull was scared and that his force lacked confidence in him, but Prevost had ordered Brock not to go on the offensive. He decided to attack. Early on 16 August, his forces crossed the Detroit River and Brock personally led the men in an attack on the fort across an open plain, despite pleas that he not expose himself to the enemy fire. Luckily he had judged the disposition of his opponent correctly: Hull surrendered without firing a shot. Had he, however, opened fire, the British line could easily have been cut down. Brash tactics worked on this occasion, winning not only a strategic position and a moral victory, but also a medal and knighthood of the Order of the Bath for the British commander.[62]

Having secured Detroit and having placated the people of the territory of Michigan by not changing the laws, Brock hurried back to Fort George.[63]

Here he faced a difficult problem: how to allocate the scant forces under his command to protect the whole of the Niagara frontier.

To guard a frontier which practically extended from the Sugar Loaf on Lake Erie to Four Mile Creek on Lake Ontario,...he had actually less than a thousand regular troops and six hundred militia, with a reserve of possibly six hundred militia and Indians....
The concentration of large bodies of men near Fort Niagara and Buffalo... forced Brock to weaken his centre and strengthen his wings, anticipating that an attempt would be made to turn his flank, and land troops a few miles in rear of the works protecting it.[64]

Brock's disposition of troops was wise if the Americans attacked in only one location ; the adjacent troops could converge to hold any threatened point until the whole British force had reached the battle site. However, if the Americans made a two-pronged attack, the British line would probably give way. The animosity between the two American commanders, Van Rensselaer and Smyth, fortunately caused plans for a double attack to be cancelled.

Van Rensselaer decided to attack only Queenston. Brock's disposition of troops held until reinforcements arrived. If Van Rensselaer had been better organized and pushed across more men and artillery, the British line might conceivably have been broken.

On learning of the invasion, Brock hastened to Queenston where he proceeded to the redan battery, an excellent location from which to view the battle. Unfortunately a group of Americans led by Wool charged down the heights and forced the British to flee the redan. Brock realized that recovering the redan would be easier if accomplished before reinforcements reached Wool. Accordingly he gathered a small force, which he led in a direct charge up the escarpment, a brave but ill-considered manoeuvre quickly halted by Brock's death. He had chosen the most direct but the most risky way to dislodge the Americans. Fortunately Brock's successor, Sheaffe, chose a flanking movement and drove the Americans off the escarpment.

Three days later, Major General Isaac Brock and his provincial aide-de-camp, John Macdonell, were buried with all due military pomp and ceremony. Then began the outpourings of grief. Even the Americans honoured their brave opponent with a gun salute during the funeral. The Upper Canadian House of Assembly requested His Royal Highness to grant crown waste lands to Brock's brothers as a mark of their respect.[65]

Brock's quick victories at Michilimackinac and Detroit followed by his sudden demise united the Upper Canadians behind the war effort. He had shown them that Britain did not intend to desert the province and that they could defeat the Americans.

People began to forget his faults, remembering only the man who had shown them that victories were possible. Thus began the legend that would call Isaac Brock the "Hero, Defender and Saviour of Upper Canada."[66]

The king's ministers summed up the prevailing attitude when they wrote Prevost that

His Royal Highness is fully aware of the severe loss which His Majesty's Service has experienced in the Death of M. Genl. Sir Isaac Brock. This would have been sufficient to have clouded a Victory of much greater importance.

His Majesty has lost in him not only an able and meritorious officer, but one also, who in the exercise of his functions of Provincial Lieut. Governor of the Province, displayed qualities admirably adapted to awe the disloyal, to reconcile the wavering and animate the great mass of the Inhabitants against successive attempts of the Enemy to invade the Province, in the last of which he unhappily fell, too prodigal of that Life of which his eminent Services had taught us to understand the value.[67]

Everyone forgot Brock's inability to collaborate with civilians and the flaws in strategic planning were overlooked in the man who united the people he distrusted. His achievements were recognized in a medal, struck in 1816 to honour "Sir Isaac Brock, the hero of Upper Canada,"[68] and in the monument erected at Queenston to his memory.

Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe

Major General Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe is usually remembered as the man who fled York, abandoning the inhabitants to capitulate to the invading Americans on the best terms which they could negotiate. The reason he was knighted, the brilliant victory at Queenston Heights, is forgotten. Some of the roots of this injustice lie in Sheaffe's own background; some in the overshadowing memory of his predecessor, while others resulted from his indifferent attitude to communication.

Sheaffe had the misfortune to be a native of the United States and to have relatives and friends who were citizens of the enemy nation. He was born in the colony of Massachusetts on 15 July 1763[1] to Suzannah and William Sheaffe. His father, who was Deputy Collector of Customs for the Port of Boston, died in 1771, leaving a widow and eight children destitute.[2] To earn money, Mrs. Sheaffe ran a boarding house in Boston, and one of her tenants during the American Revolution was Baron Percy, the future Duke of Northumberland, who established his headquarters at the Sheaffe home. The earl became young Sheaffe's patron, sending him to sea as a midshipman at 10 years of age, and then transferring him to Locke's military academy in England. Here he was a classmate of his future commanding officer, Sir George Prevost.[3]

Baron Percy purchased the young boy an ensigncy in his own regiment, the Fifth Regiment of Foot, on 1 May 1778, and a lieutenancy in the same regiment on 27 December 1780. It was with this regiment that Sheaffe served his first tour of duty in Canada. Before coming to Canada, however, he spent six and one-half years with the Fifth in Ireland.[4]

The Fifth sailed for Canada in July, 1787, and did not return to England until September 1797. Apparently Sheaffe spent much of the 10 years in Upper Canada serving under Lieutenant Governor John Graves Simcoe. A letter addressed to his mother indicates that in 1791 he was in the Detroit area.[5]

Early in 1794, during the negotiations preceding Jay's Treaty, Simcoe became disturbed by rumours of new American settlements on the south shore of Lake Ontario, particularly at Sodus. He was worried not only by the possible military intentions of these new settlements but also by the threat that their demand on Canadian wheat supplies would force the price to rise. Accordingly, he dispatched Lieutenant Sheaffe and a military escort to remonstrate with the settlers. Sheaffe delivered the following protest, which caused a furor.

I am commanded to declare that during the inexecution of the treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States, and until the existing differences respecting it, shall be mutually adjusted, the taking possession of any part of the Indian Territory, either for the purposes of war or sovereignty, is held to be a direct violation of his Britannic Majesty's rights, as they unquestionably existed before the treaty, and has an immediate tendency to interrupt and in its progress destroy that good understanding which had hitherto subsisted between his Britannic Majesty and the United States of America. I therefore require you to desist from any such aggression.[6]

The whole American government went into an uproar over the Sodus incident, labeling it Simcoe's invasion. George Washington referred to it as the "most open and daring act of the British agents."[7] The Americans did not blame Sheaffe for the incident, however, realizing that he was acting upon Simcoe's orders.

The Sodus incident became a dead issue when Jay's Treaty was signed in November, and the remainder of Sheaffe's time in Canada apparently passed quietly, as there is very little information on it. He did become a captain in the Fifth on 5 May 1795.

Shortly after Sheaffe's return to England, he became a major of the 81st Regiment, and then he applied for and received a transfer to the 49th Regiment, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel in the process. As junior lieutenant colonel, he saw action with his new regiment in Holland in 1799 and the Baltic in 1801. The regiment was then transferred to Canada: the detachment under Sheaffe arrived at Quebec City on 7 September 1802.[8]

On the whole, this second tour of duty in Canada, which ended in October of 1811,[9] was as uneventful as the first. Since Brock always acquired his promotion a few months before Sheaffe, the latter was always the junior, the one who was given the orders, never the one to do the ordering. As he was promoted, he did get opportunities to command at various forts, but Brock always had the

better posting. Shortly after they arrived in Canada, the two lieutenant colonels were ordered to the upper country; Sheaffe to Fort George and Brock to York, the capital and the focal point of communications in the colony. These postings were reversed a year later due to a very sorry incident. Transfer for Sheaffe meant censure.

Sheaffe was the commanding officer at Fort George on 7 August 1803 when Brock surreptitiously arrived at the post and imprisoned a number of men who were suspected of conspiring to mutiny and desert. Brock had been sent for by Sheaffe, whose suspicions had been aroused. There is a controversy over why these men, who were found guilty and either shot or transported to Barbados, were led to plan such a crime. Brock blamed the incident on Sheaffe, whom he claimed was too zealous and too much the disciplinarian. Several of the convicted men, however, produced statements praising Sheaffe for his humanity and leniency.[10] Probably the isolation and loneliness of Fort George, coupled with a "follow the rule-book" attitude by Sheaffe, the product of a military academy, created the atmosphere of desperation which induced the men to conspire. There is a brief reference to the escape of two deserters from confinement in the black hole and handcuffs in 1805, which confirms that Sheaffe was strict with prisoners.[11]

This conspiracy was the only outstanding incident of his second period in Canada. Sheaffe rose to the brevet rank of colonel on 25 April 1808, and shortly before he left Canada he was promoted to major general. His reason for leaving Canada and his destination are not at all clear. Probably it was a leave of absence to visit England with his bride, Margaret, the daughter of John Coffin of Quebec.[12]

It is unlikely that Sheaffe had rejoined his regiment in Canada when the United States declared war on Great Britain, since he did not receive a posting until 30 July when Prevost appointed him "Major-General on the Staff of the Army Serving in British North America until his Majesty's pleasure be known."[13] The last phrase tends to support the contention of some writers that Sheaffe asked for a European posting so he would not have to fight his homeland.[14] If Sheaffe did place such a request, it was denied and he was posted to Upper Canada because, in Prevost's words, "from his long residence in that Country, and his known abilities; I feel confident he will prove of material assistance to Major General Brock under whose command I have placed him."[15]

When Sheaffe reached Upper Canada, Brock had set out for the Detroit frontier, so Sheaffe assumed command of the Niagara frontier with his headquarters at Fort George. Meanwhile, the British government had rescinded the Orders in Council upon which the Americans had based the declaration of war. Prevost, hoping to end the war, had arranged a temporary armistice with Dearborn until President Madison could consider his position under these new circumstances. Soon after he settled at Fort George, Sheaffe and the opposing American commander, General Stephen Van Rensselaer, signed this armistice for the Niagara frontier, in accordance with the wishes of their commanding officers. Van Rensselaer, however, suggested a supplementary clause that, "No reinforcements of men or supplies of ammunition shall be sent, by either party, higher up than Fort Erie."[16] When this amendment was presented to Sheaffe on 20 August, he had just received word that Hull's army had surrendered to Brock. Knowing that Van Rensselaer was unaware of this important development, Sheaffe quickly signed the armistice.[17] Prevost was furious. He wrote Brock:

In answer to this communication I have to acquaint you that the conditions stated in Colonel Baynes's Letter to the Officer commanding at Fort George ought to have been considered as conclusive and binding not to be deviated from, but to be religiously observed by him;–Any alteration proposed by the American General Officer which it might have appeared to Genl Sheaffe prudent and politic to accede, should have been consented to under the reservation of the Commander of the Forces's final approval. It was expressly stated to Genl Dearborn and clearly understood by him that our mutual supplies and reinforcements should move unmolested, with the contemplation of succouring Amherstburg; as thing's are embarrassment may ensue to His Majesty's Service in Upper Canada which it may be necessary to remove by not acknowledging Major General Sheaffe's agreement.[18]

No embarrassment did ensue and it is difficult to conceive how the British government could be embarrassed by the alteration. The situation on the

6 Sir Roger Hale Sheaffe.
(*Public Archives of Canada.*)

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Detroit frontier had already been decided : it was unlikely that reinforcements to either side would change the respective positions since the British had captured an armed brig and sufficient ammunition to hold Fort Detroit against even an attacking American flotilla, while reinforcements and supplies for the British would only be stockpiled, as they had no more objectives to capture on the frontier.

Prevost soon had to stop worrying about possible embarrassing situations and handle Brock's urgent requests for reinforcements for the Niagara frontier. The Americans cancelled the armistice and began building up their forces for an attack, which occurred at Queenston on 13 October.

Sheaffe arrived at the edge of the battle around noon. Brock and his aide-de-camp, Macdonell, had already been killed in unsuccessful frontal attacks on the American position, so Sheaffe wisely chose a flanking movement that took his force well out of cannon range until they were level with the rear of the American army. This excellent manoeuvre resulted in the complete defeat of the American forces and the capture of over 900 prisoners.

The congratulations which streamed in on his overwhelming success would have seemed to indicate a propitious beginning for the new commander of His Majesty's forces in Upper Canada and the new President Administering

the Government. (Sheaffe succeeded to both positions on the death of Brock.) The Executive Council referred to *the happy effect of the coolness, intrepidity and Judgment which you displayed in that eminent situation, the Inhabitants of this province do now feel, & will ever most gratefully remember. Such a happy commencement leads us to look to the future with confidence and hope, & to consider what is past but as a presage of what is to come.*[19]

The king expressed his pleasure with Sheaffe's conduct in more concrete terms: on 16 January 1813, he conferred upon him the title of Baronet of the United Kingdom.[20]

The general pleasure with Sheaffe was, however, of very short duration. He signed a temporary armistice with the Americans to exchange prisoners, attend to the wounded, and bury Major General Brock with military honours. Sheaffe felt he was unable to press his advantage because he was hindered by the number of prisoners he had taken. Fort George had not been built to incarcerate 900 men. Paroling the militia and sending the regulars off to Quebec seemed to be the only solution. Prevost, however, disagreed. *I am sorry that I cannot approve of the extensive liberality you have practised towards the Prisoners of War nor do I feel the weight of the argument you adduce to justify you having taken upon yourself to allow Brigadier General Wadsworth to go on his parole without having had a previous communication with me...on the policy and propriety of such a measure.*

When Sheaffe arranged an indefinite prolongation of the armistice, Prevost was even more reproachful. The only excuse he could see for such a measure was if time was essential to repair a section of the British defences, which had been weakened.[21]

Others were less cautious in their condemnation of Sheaffe's conciliatory policy. The *Quebec Gazette* said: *We do not mean to criticise the acts of our executive, but surely such lenity is not to continue forever, we only wish the people on the other side may feel that gratitude for such unexampled generous conduct which it merits.*[22]

Later historians were very unkind to Sheaffe's policy. *But Sheaffe, who was born in New England before the Revolution, and who had many American connections, was criminally weak after the battle had been won. Evans had driven the Americans out of Fort Niagara, which might have been seized and held against Van Rensselaer's beaten force, now deprived of its best men. With the mouth of the river under British control the American hold on the frontier might have been almost shaken off. Brock would have done it in a week. But Sheaffe concluded an armistice, at first for three days, then for an indefinite time; and the military advantages of victory were wantonly thrown away.*[23]

In Sheaffe's defence it must be added that his commanding officer had forbidden offensive moves. Brock had been held back by Prevost's instructions; it was unlikely that the more cautious Sheaffe would disobey. Prevost, however, overlooked his own standing orders when he wrote the Colonial Office that: *After the Affair of Queenston Sir R. H. Sheaffe lost a glorious opportunity of crossing the Niagara River during the confusion and dismay which then prevailed, for the purpose of destroying Fort Niagara, in which attempt he could not have failed, and by which the command of the Niagara River would have been secured to us during the War, and Niagara, like Ogdensburgh, would have ceased to be an object of disquietude; But the eminent military talents of Sir Isaac Brock having ceased to animate the little army, the advantage of that day was not sufficiently improved.*[24]

Furthermore, Sheaffe had to consider how he could maintain his hold on any territory he seized. Brock had had difficulty allocating his troops to hold the Niagara frontier, and if the British captured Fort Niagara, troops would have to be diverted to fortify it. The troops to form such a garrison were not available. The decision on whether or not to press the advantage after the victory at Queenston apparently was one that could satisfy no one.

Nevertheless, Sheaffe's problems were only beginning. Rumours started which attributed his decision not to attack the United States to a reluctance on Sheaffe's part to invade his homeland. Such an opinion, however, does not explain Sheaffe's decision to weaken Fort Niagara by cannonading it after the expiration of the armistice.[25]

After the unsuccessful American invasion at Black Rock on 28 November, the commanding officer at Fort Erie, fearing a second attempt, requested reinforcements. Sheaffe wisely replied that reinforcements could not be spared to that extremity of the line because to do so would allow the Americans to cut the small British force in two and defeat each half individually. Sheaffe accordingly advised that the force at Fort Erie should retreat toward Chippawa if it was attacked. The indignant commanding officer at Fort Erie presented Sheaffe's suggestions to a council of his fellow officers who expressed outrage that their superior should condone and even recommend retreat. Rumours quickly labelled Sheaffe a traitor. *The verbal suggestion previously said in joke and not correct, coupled with the written sanction to abandon the Position was circulated as the Sentiment of a Traitor, and gave excuse for meetings and combinations against the Commanding General, in which more than militia officers took part.*[26]

Apparently Prevost heard of the rumblings and faction forming against Sheaffe, for he reported to England in March that confidence in the President of Upper Canada had been restored.[27] Significantly, Prevost had received this impression from members of the legislature with whom Sheaffe was always on good terms.

Although he had succeeded to the presidency of the administration as soon as Brock died, it was not until 20 October that Sheaffe had time to go to York and take the oath of office.[28] Over the winter he was seldom occupied by administrative duties because he was concerned with the military defence of the colony and his own illness. Throughout January and February, Sheaffe was so ill that Brigadier General John Vincent was temporarily promoted to supersede him.[29] As soon as he recovered, Sheaffe summoned the legislature to meet on 25 February. This session implemented everything Sheaffe requested: controls over grain were instituted; an advance on annuities to widows, children and the disabled, was sanctioned; money was appropriated for defence and militia clothing; Lower Canada's army bills were authorized as currency, and finally the militia bill was altered.[30] Instead of the flank companies, the president was authorized to issue a bounty to volunteers serving for the duration of the war. It was expected that these regiments of incorporated militia would be more efficient than the flank companies had been.[31] The legislature had felt that they could afford a bounty of only eight dollars, so Sheaffe added ten dollars from the military chest to be certain of enticing volunteers.[32] Having accomplished his goals, Sheaffe prorogued the legislature on 13 March.

It is not surprising that Sheaffe's relationship with the legislature was cordial: at least two members of the Executive Council were close associates. According to a biography of William Dummer Powell, Powell had known Sheaffe from childhood and was Sheaffe's trusted adviser on problems relating to the administration. The other close ally was the new attorney general, John Beverley Robinson, who owed his appointment to Sheaffe.[33]

It was fortunate that the duties of president were easily performed: the duties of commander were onerous because Sheaffe inherited poorly organized logistics departments. As one of the senior officers expressed it, *I pity much the General's situation with regard to the inefficient state of the Militia, the Barrack Department, and, I may add, even the Commissariat. These certainly are not the results of any fault in General S*[heaffe], *tho I plainly see he will have to bear the blame. I would feel sorry to attach blame to our late lamented commander,...but in justice to the living I own that the two former of these departments have from the commencement of the war been miserably defective, without any system or arrangement whatever, and I hesitate not to declare that the persons holding the ostensible positions never have been nor are they now possessed of the necessary information or energy to render them competent to a successful discharge of their several duties. These are not new or hasty observations, but such as have been intimated to poor General B*[rock] *and which, as Myers can vouch, now stands registered by me as not having been attended to. Indeed, my d*[ear] *Sir, it is a melancholy truth that everything that had for its object arrangement and method was obliged to be done*

by stealth. Poor General Brock's high spirit would never descend to particulars, trifles I may say in the abstract, but ultimately essentials.[34]
The new Militia Act was Sheaffe's attempt to improve the Militia Department. He also suggested a way to relieve the Commissariat Department by transferring the militia accounts to the Receiver General.[35] Possibly more alterations would have been accomplished had Sheaffe not been so ill.

There is no written record of Sheaffe's own strategy for the conduct of the war. What can be deduced from his actions seems to be an agreement with Prevost's policy of only defensive measures in the hope that the Americans would either tire and withdraw or that Britain would extricate herself in Europe and send help so offensive measures could become feasible. Sheaffe's decision not to attack after the Battle of Queenston Heights and his retreat toward Kingston after the defeat at York indicate that he, too, believed in not over-extending the British lines and in pulling back toward Quebec City when it became necessary.

Sheaffe certainly followed this policy of caution at the Battle of York. When the American fleet appeared to the east of York in the evening of 26 April 1813, Sheaffe calmly made his preparations, calling the militia to the town, but judging correctly that the attack would not begin until the next day. The next morning he waited until it became apparent where the landing would occur before dispatching Major Givins and his Indians, two companies of the 8th or King's Regiment, a company of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and a company of the Glengarry Light Infantry (which arrived too late), to resist the landing. Some historians have argued that since the fortifications of York were weak,[36] Sheaffe's only chance was to throw his whole force into resisting the landing.[37] This argument is particularly interesting when it is considered that the only troops Sheaffe did not order to the landing area were one company of the 8th Regiment, which he withheld in case the Americans tried to land some of their force at the other end of town; 13 men of the Royal Artillery who could not have dragged their guns through the bush, and the York militia. The myth of the value of the Canadian militia has already been exploded.[38] Considering the quick success of the American beachhead, it is difficult to conceive how these few extra troops would have made a significant difference.

Despite several rallies led by Sheaffe, the British troops began falling back upon the western battery, where the travelling magazine blew up, upsetting one of the guns and rendering this battery useless. The story was the same as the British kept retreating, trying to make a stand at various emplacements against the onslaught of American troops and the bombardment of the American ships. It became increasingly apparent that York could not be held.
A further stand by Sheaffe might have been quite heroic and in the finest tradition, but it would have been too costly and would have gained nothing. The die was cast for Sheaffe; he would retreat to Kingston and take with him those regulars still capable of performing the march.[39]

Composed as usual, Sheaffe first ordered destroyed the ship on the stocks, the naval stores, and the grand magazine. The explosion of the magazine wreaked havoc on the American front lines, a circumstance that Sheaffe had not foreseen and one that he was unprepared to capitalize upon. Since Sheaffe was busy organizing the retreat and giving orders to militia officers to negotiate the surrender of the town, he was probably completely unaware of the possibility of a last-minute rally. Despite the opinion of Strachan and his friends,[40] a last-minute charge by the British would not have deterred the Americans; they outnumbered the British by approximately 2,000 to 600 men.

Although it is hard to imagine what other course of action Sheaffe could have taken, Prevost was dissatisfied. He claimed that Sheaffe had "lost the confidence of the province."[41] This is surprising in view of the address of the Executive Council on 16 June 1813, thanking Sheaffe for his efforts in the administration of the province and for thwarting the objective of the enemy at York (the capture of the ship on the stocks).[42] Nevertheless, Prevost replaced Sheaffe with Major General de Rottenburg. Sheaffe was ordered to take command of the troops in the Montreal district.[43]

This appointment was not an onerous one. There was no fighting in this district, and in September Prevost superseded Sheaffe by establishing headquarters in Montreal.[44] Despite the inactivity on the frontier, Prevost was disappointed in Sheaffe.

When I ordered a senior General Officer to yourself from the Lower to the Upper Province in order to relieve you from the command of the latter, I made a sacrifice of my private feelings to my public Duty, and my own opinion yielded to the General clamour, – I then fully expected you would have pursued such a line of conduct in your new command as would have rendered manisfest the inexpediency of the measure, instead of confirming the necessity of it by the indifference with which you discharge the important Duties now committed to you. The difficulties of my situation require the active support of every individual holding a place of trust, you will I hope not again disappoint my expectations as regards yourself.[45]

Sheaffe was mystified : he could not conceive how Prevost had formed the opinion that he was indifferent. As he wrote to Prevost :

I know not on what grounds or information but I flatter myself that those who are best acquainted with me would expect any other charge than that of indifference in the discharge of my duties to be made against me ; and I trust that a correct knowledge of my daily employment, and of the thoughts which occupy my mind, would convince Your Excellency that it is not justly imputable to me.[46]

The problem was that Sheaffe did not elaborate : he did not tell Prevost how his time was spent, just as he had not fully explained why he had agreed to the extension of the three-day armistice after the Battle of Queenston Heights, or why retreat had been the only viable manoeuvre at York. Throughout his career, communicating plagued Sheaffe. If he had written for Prevost's sanction to the amendment of the armistice in the summer of 1812 ; or written for permission to renew the Queenston armistice ; or explained to the officers at Fort Erie why it would be foolhardy to strengthen that post at the expense of the centre of their line, Prevost might not have had such a misconception, and the officers at Fort Erie might not have begun conspiring against him. Possibly if he had communicated better he would not have been transferred to England.

Orders were received for Sheaffe to return to England on 14 August 1813, but his departure was delayed until November.[47] The return to England was softened by the prospect of a better appointment. He did get appointed to the Army Staff of Great Britain on 25 March 1814 but the appointment was subsequently recalled and deferred. Sheaffe did not receive any more appointments but he did receive three promotions ; lieutenant general on 19 July 1821, general on 28 June 1828, and colonel of the 36th Regiment on 21 December 1829.[48] The rest of his life was passed quietly at his seat of Edswale in the county of Clare. He died in Edinburgh on 17 July 1851.[49]

Sheaffe contributed much to this country. He saved it from the Americans at Queenston, and when it was impossible to prevent them from gaining a foothold, he withdrew, holding intact his regulars to fight again. Overshadowed by his predecessor, who cut the more daring figure and who died having never lost a battle, Sheaffe is forgotten. He did not lead courageous charges, he did not waste lives, but he did defeat the enemy overwhelmingly and he did achieve the legislation he wanted. Had he been more explicit on the reasons for his actions and more demonstrative of his loyalty to Britain, he might have been more trusted. The efforts of quiet, unassuming men are often deprecated simply because they are unknown. Sheaffe was not a brilliant general but he was competent, and he deserves more attention in our history than he has received.

John Macdonell

John Macdonell (Greenfield), the young man fatally wounded at Queenston Heights, was one of the numerous Macdonells of Glengarry, Upper Canada. John was born 19 April 1785 at Greenfield, Glengarry, Scotland. The fourth son of Alexander and Janet Macdonell, he emigrated with his family to Canada in 1792. Either the family was wealthy or his parents believed strongly in education, for the six Macdonell brothers were educated at John Strachan's Cornwall school. The fact that Roman Catholic children were being taught by a staunch Anglican illustrates the paucity of educational facilities in the new colony.[1]

Apparently Macdonell decided to follow the advice of his cousin, Alexander Macdonell of Collachie, who recommended that he move to York and train for a law career. On 6 April 1803, he became a law student and was called to the bar of Upper Canada in the Easter term of 1808. Harkness's suggestion that Macdonell was "a very successful practitioner" makes it feasible that he was the John Macdonell that William Dummer Powell, the future chief justice of Upper Canada, recommended as clerk of several commissions of Oyer and Terminer in the Eastern District. If this was John Macdonell (Greenfield), there is no evidence he ever held the position.[2]

Macdonell's law career did result in one very exciting episode. In April, 1811, John opposed Dr. William W. Baldwin in a law case. Baldwin became incensed with Macdonell and challenged him to a duel. The men and their seconds met at the appointed hour, paced off the distance and Baldwin fired – wide. Macdonell had not raised his pistol to aim. They then shook hands and parted, their honour satisfied.[3] Generally, however, Macdonell's life seems to have been placid. He was probably the secretary of the Toronto Public Library who inserted on 26 December 1811 in *The York Gazette* an advertisement for their annual meeting.[4]

His situation altered drastically in the fall of 1811. The accounts of the attorney general, William Firth, were not approved by the auditors and Firth angrily decamped for England, leaving this essential position vacant. Lieutenant Governor Gore, acting on the advice of the Executive Council, appointed Macdonell acting attorney general. Gore, however, felt that no resident of the province was fully qualified for the position. Among those who probably recommended Macdonell for the position was Chief Justice Powell. Many writers claim that Macdonell was engaged to Mary Bowles Powell.[5]

Apparently Macdonell performed his duties very well since Brock recommended that he be confirmed in the position, and Gore expressed himself as pleased when the Prince Regent did confirm him as attorney general of Upper Canada on 14 April 1812.[6]

There is no evidence that Macdonell ever acted as public prosecutor. The available sources suggest that his duties were limited to issuing fiats for such things as calling and proroguing the legislature.

Early in the spring of 1812 an election was held, and Macdonell decided to run for the House of Assembly. Accordingly, he wrote the electors of Glengarry requesting their support, which he subsequently received. When he did take his seat at the first meeting in July, he failed to accomplish anything. Although Macdonell was strongly allied with the administration because of his position as attorney general and his new position as provincial aide-de-camp, he was apparently unsuccessful in persuading his colleagues to enact the administration's proposals.[7]

Meanwhile, Brock was becoming alarmed at the growing bellicose spirit of the American congress. Accordingly, he made preparations in case war was declared. A new Militia Act was presented to the winter session of the legislature, and in April, John Macdonell was appointed provincial aide-de-camp. He was given the rank of lieutenant colonel in the militia,[8] but there is no evidence to suggest that he was assigned to any particular regiment. Ostensibly the position of provincial aide-de-camp was identical to aide-de-camp. Certainly at Detroit, Macdonell and Glegg, the aide-de-camp, performed the same duties.

Between the period Macdonell was appointed provincial aide-de-camp and the march on Detroit, little is known of his activities. He did apply for leave of absence from the attorney general's office for a period of six weeks to attend to his "private affairs . . . in the Eastern district."[9] Whether or not his request was granted is unknown.

After the summer session of the legislature which Macdonell attended,

Brock and his staff departed quickly to force Hull's army back to Detroit. As soon as they arrived at Amherstburg and discovered that Hull had retreated to Detroit, Brock dispatched Glegg and Macdonell under a white flag to demand that Hull surrender.[10] He refused. Two days later Brock crossed the river and advanced in force upon Fort Detroit. The frightened Hull immediately offered to surrender and Macdonell and Glegg were again dispatched to negotiate the terms of capitulation.

Following the completion of the surrender Brock wrote Prevost: *I cannot on this occasion avoid mentioning the essential assistance which I derived from John Mcdonell Esqr. His Majesty's Attorney General, who from the beginning of the war has honored me with his Services, as my Provincial Aide de Camp.*[11] Macdonell was posthumously awarded a medal for his activities at Detroit.[12]

Once Detroit was secured, Brock hastened to the Niagara frontier and it is likely that Macdonell accompanied him. The period from the capture of Detroit to the Battle of Queenston Heights Macdonell probably spent alternating between York and Fort George trying to perform his duties as attorney general and provincial aide-de-camp.

Macdonell was definitely at Fort George when Van Rensselaer's army attacked Queenston. As soon as the members of the staff at Fort George were informed of the invasion, they followed Brock to the battle site. Macdonell probably arrived after Brock had charged the redan and been killed. Gathering the small British force around him, Macdonell led a second charge up the redan, gained the top, and was mortally wounded. It is certainly understandable that a young man, untrained in military tactics, would repeat the mistake of his superior.

Macdonell died the next day and was interred with Brock at Fort George following a military funeral.[13]

Stephen and Solomon Van Rensselaer

The Van Rensselaer Family

Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, one of the founders of Dutch settlement in North America, persuaded the Dutch West India Company to encourage farming and settlement by granting feudal domains to patroons (wealthy Dutch citizens who settled a minimum of 50 people in North America). Patroon Kiliaen, who did himself emigrate, was given a domain 24 by 48 miles in extent, called Rensselaerwyck, in the vicinity of Albany, New York.

Stephen and Solomon Van Rensselaer, the subjects of this paper, were fifth generation descendants of Kiliaen. When Stephen, the eighth patroon, inherited Rensselaerwyck, the estate was intact and the numerous feudal dues were still applicable.[1]

Solomon Van Rensselaer

The man who led the first American contingent to cross the Niagara River on 13 October 1812 had two careers during his lifetime, but neither was an unqualified success. The military career of Solomon Van Rensselaer fluctuated with the prevailing attitude toward militarism in the United States, and his second vocation, that of Albany postmaster, was largely dependent upon whether his political friends or enemies held office in Washington.

7 Solomon Van Rensselaer.
(*Public Archives of Canada.*)

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Solomon Van Rensselaer was born 6 August 1774 to Alida and Henry Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in Rensselaer County, New York. He was a fifth-generation descendant of the first patroon and a cousin of the last one, Stephen Van Rensselaer. Because of these family connections, throughout his life Solomon was accorded a degree of deference and prestige which was probably advantageous in securing him positions.

Solomon chose to imitate his father, who had been a general in the American Revolutionary War. On 15 May 1792, he was commissioned a cornet of dragoons in the 4th Cavalry and was posted to Albany as a recruiting officer. Promoted to captain on 28 March 1794, Solomon served under General "Mad Anthony" Wayne in his campaign against the Indians. Although he was seriously wounded at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, Solomon showed his leadership qualities by taking command on the field and was rewarded with a promotion to major in 1799, after he had recovered.[2]

However, the American attitude toward the military was changing; danger seemed less imminent and a large military establishment less essential. When Jefferson became a presidential candidate, he promised a "chaste reformation" and one of the casualties was Solomon. He was honourably discharged on 15 June 1800, never to serve again in the federal armed services.[3]

Being discharged by the federal government did not end Solomon's military career. If the federal government did not want his services, the state of New York was eager to use them. There is no reason to believe that influence or pressure was used to secure Solomon the position of adjutant general of New York, although his being a Van Rensselaer may well have worked in his favour. On 23 January 1801, he was appointed adjutant general, a post he held until 1809, and again from 1810 to 1811, and finally from 1813 until 12 February 1821.[4] There is no known reason for the break between 1809 and 1810. From 1811 to 1813, Solomon's political opponent, Tompkins, was governor of New York, and he may have had Solomon removed for political reasons. He was most likely reappointed by Tompkins in 1813 because he was a popular, injured war hero.

The position of adjutant general involved organizing the secretariat of the military establishment. It therefore was not a job which drew attention, either favourable or condemnatory, to the individual. While Solomon made no impression on the public as adjutant general, he received a new military appointment which brought him into prominence.

Shortly after Madison declared war on Great Britain, Governor Tompkins made a political manoeuvre. He appointed Stephen Van Rensselaer, his probable opponent in the next election, to the command of the army on the state's northern frontier. Tompkins knew he had Stephen, a man of no military experience, in a quandary. He had to accept and pull the Federalist support behind the war or be discredited in the eyes of the electorate. Stephen accepted on condition that Solomon would be named his aide-de-camp.[5] This appointment took effect on 13 July 1812, the day the two cousins left for the front.

Their first destination was Sackets Harbor. While there, Solomon proposed that a group of volunteers under his command should try to capture a British vessel on the St. Lawrence River. Preparations were made but in the end the volunteers refused to cross the state border.[6]

Following this raid, Stephen transferred his headquarters to Lewiston on the Niagara frontier. Almost immediately an armistice was signed which lasted until early September. Under the terms arranged, both sides were granted unhindered access to Lake Ontario. Accordingly some supplies were shipped to the Niagara frontier.

There is a very interesting account of a conversation between Solomon and the British officer who arranged the armistice. Major Evans reported that Solomon admitted that both he and Stephen were opposed to the war and that they were confident the pacifists would control the state government after the spring election.[7] Solomon's confession was both disloyal and unmilitary, even though it was truthful. The available documents suggest there were no repercussions: probably his superiors, military and political, never learned of these remarks.

After the armistice was terminated, Stephen began planning an offensive manoeuvre. Although he was ill for the last half of September,[8] Solomon probably participated in the meetings which arranged an assault under his leadership. Solomon was, therefore, partially responsible for the unwise decision to attack only at Queenston, after Brigadier General Smyth refused to participate in a two-pronged assault. Even if the Americans had succeeded at Queenston, they would still have had to besiege Fort George and Erie before their position in the Niagara area would be tenable.

On 13 October 1812, Solomon led his vanguard of 300 New York militia across the Niagara River. Almost immediately he was severely wounded and had to be transported back to Lewiston; however, he did not recross the river before he had either ordered or agreed to the flanking movement which resulted in the capture of the redan. He had wisely recognized that the Americans' only chance was a long shot – to gain the heights, since further progress into the village was blocked by the British defenders.

Since he was removed to the American side, Solomon was in no way culpable for the disaster which American arms later suffered. When Stephen resigned after the defeat, the recuperating Solomon also resigned to help Stephen campaign for the governorship of the state of New York.[9]

The Battle of Queenston Heights was Solomon's last experience with active warfare. Reinstated in the post of adjutant general, Solomon eventually decided to combine his military career with a political one. Albany County elected him to the House of Representatives in 1818 and 1820. In Washington, he sat on the Congressional Military Affairs Committee[10] but he resigned from Congress in January of 1822 to hold a patronage job.

Despite the protests of Martin Van Buren, Tompkins and Rufus King, Solomon was appointed Albany postmaster in January, 1822. One month later his home, Mount Hope, on the outskirts of Albany, was burned. Arson was suspected and rewards totalling $1,250.00 were offered by the governor, city council and Solomon.[11] There is no evidence that the culprit was caught.

If the fire was caused by Solomon's political enemies, it was not their only action. After Andrew Jackson's election to the presidency, Solomon went to Washington and begged to be retained as Albany postmaster. "Old Hickory" probably kept him because of his war record. However, his injuries could not save him from his long-time political opponent, Martin Van Buren, who removed Solomon from the post office on 18 March 1839.[12]

Later in the year, Solomon was a delegate to the Whig convention and helped nominate his old companion in arms, William H. Harrison. "Tippecanoe" rewarded him with the Albany post office in March of 1841, but he was removed by Tyler on 2 April 1843 and denied the office again by Tyler in 1849.[13]

When Solomon died on 23 April 1852 he was a rather bitter man.[14] Despite occurrences like the public dinner in his honour at Detroit on 12 July 1825, he felt cheated.[15] In 1836, he published *A Narrative of the Affair at Queenstown: In the War of 1812. With a Review of the Strictures on that Event in a Book Entitled, "Notices of the War of 1812,"* in which he sought to justify the behaviour of Stephen Van Rensselaer and by inference remove any blame from himself.

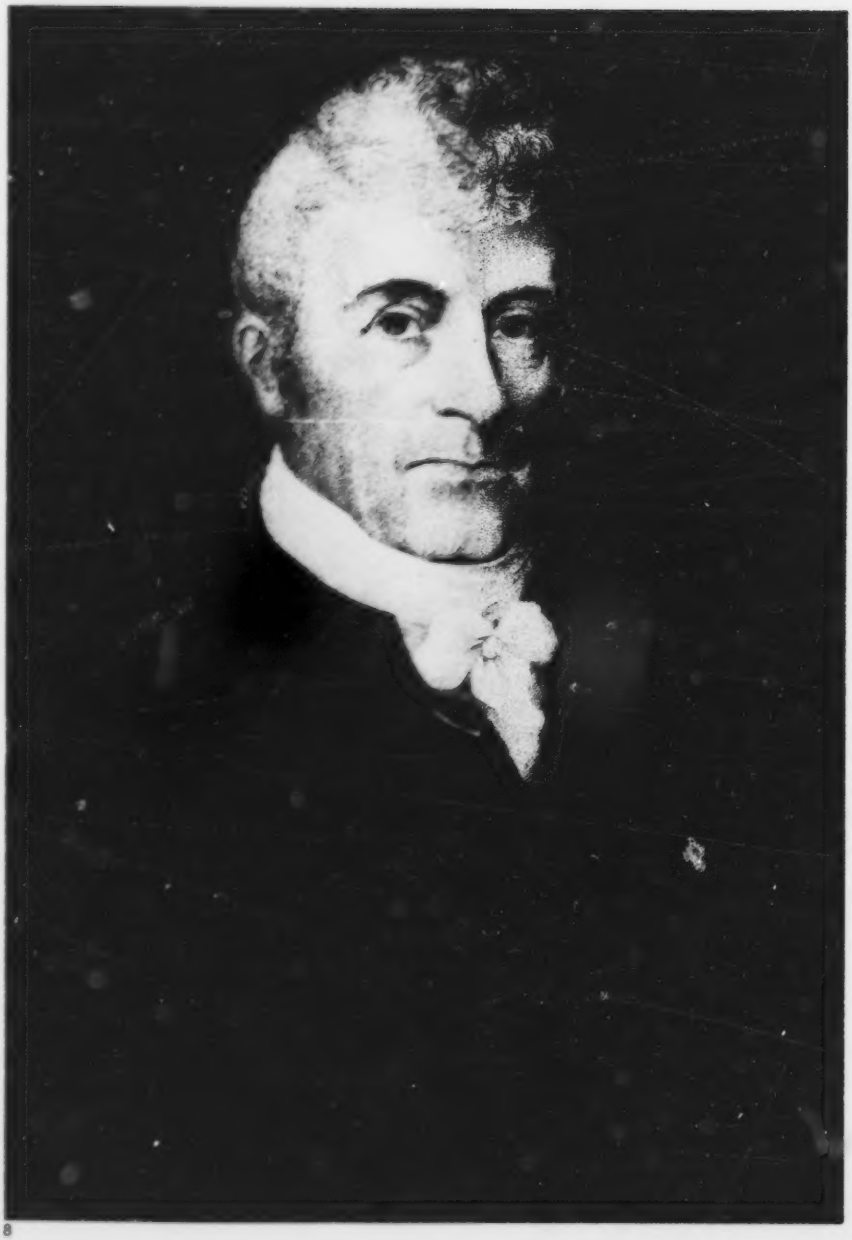
As a young man Solomon had a hot temper, which in 1812 nearly involved him in a duel over local politics,[16] and in later life this temper cooled to disappointment over not being justly rewarded for his military exploits. Unfortunately for Solomon, he was simply a pawn in a period of bitter politics both between parties and within them.

Stephen Van Rensselaer

Stephen Van Rensselaer, the unfortunate gentleman who was in command of the army which attacked at Queenston on 13 October 1812, was not a soldier by desire or inclination. He was not a politician either, although he filled that role with more success than he did his military one: rather, he was one of those few wealthy men who devoted their time and fortunes to benevolent and educational activities. As a benefactor Stephen was a success: he earned the devotion which the people of New York State felt for him.

Stephen Van Rensselaer, the eighth and last patroon, was born 1 November 1764. When Stephen was five his father died, leaving the young heir and his vast estate in the care of his maternal grandfather, Philip Livingston,[17] and his uncle, General Ten Broeck. Mr. Livingston sent Stephen to Prince-

8 Stephen Van Rensselaer. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



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ton University until the Revolutionary armies began to campaign in New Jersey, when Stephen transferred to Harvard. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1782. In 1825, Yale conferred upon him the honourary degree of Doctor of Laws.[18]

His education completed, Stephen returned to the Albany district to settle on his estate. On 6 June 1783, he married Margaret Schuyler, daughter of General Philip Schuyler. Margaret died in 1801 and a year later Stephen married Cornelia Patterson.[19]

Meanwhile he became involved with the management of his estate. Realizing that much of his domain was lying dormant, he granted more perpetual leases at moderate rents but did not sell any land. Although he maintained the feudal dues, Stephen was lax about collecting them. He was not lax, however, about protecting his property rights. In December of 1794, Stephen prohibited all those who had not obtained prior permission from cutting firewood on Rensselaerwyck. Apparently some individuals had been abusing this privilege, which had been granted by the Van Rensselaers two centuries before.[20]

Stephen's military career began in 1786 when he was commissioned a major in the New York infantry. In 1801, he was promoted to the rank of major general of the cavalry. Despite these high ranks, Stephen had no real military experience. He was probably commissioned in the state's militia because of his prestige as patroon.

Meanwhile Stephen also became involved in state politics. After being defeated in 1787, he was elected to the state assembly in 1789 and to the state senate in 1791. A state senator from 1791 to 1795,[21] he was elected John Jay's lieutenant governor in 1795 and remained in that position until 1801. The Federalist party then nominated him for the state's highest office but he was defeated by George Clinton. Clinton's election was helped, no doubt, by the prior election of Jefferson to the presidency of the United States. Stephen then sat in several subsequent sessions of the assembly and was chosen a member of the state constitutional conventions of 1801 and 1821.[22]

One of the issues to be decided at the constitutional convention of 1821 was the extent of suffrage. Stephen opposed the property qualification, thereby favouring a wide extension of suffrage, since much of New York State was owned by a few wealthy men like himself. In effect he was voting to end the hegemony of his own class. He did, however, oppose universal suffrage, arguing that wandering individuals should not be allowed to vote. Stephen's proposals were defeated and he declined to sign the new constitution.[23]

When Madison declared war in June of 1812, the Republican party under Daniel D. Tompkins was in power in New York State. Tompkins and his party rallied quickly to aid the war effort but the Federalists, who planned to nominate Stephen for the governorship in the spring elections of 1813, opposed the war. Tompkins accordingly made a very cunning political manoeuvre; he asked Stephen to command the army on the state's northern frontier. Tompkins knew that if Stephen refused he would discredit himself in the eyes of the electorate. On the other hand, if he accepted, the Federalists would have to end their opposition to the war; and if he accepted and blundered, which was likely considering his lack of experience, he would also discredit himself. Tompkins and the Republicans could not lose even if he accepted and performed brilliantly, for then he would be compelled to remain in command of the army. Stephen accepted on condition that his cousin Solomon, who had some military experience, could be his aide-de-camp.[24]

Stephen probably realized that he was not qualified for the command he held. In a letter to Tompkins on 17 September 1812, he wrote:
To perform my duty, arduous as it is, is comparatively easy, but to determine what my duty is, in a wide field for action, where every thing is unshaped and uncertain, is often a task of no small difficulty; I am conscious to myself that I have studied it faithfully, and performed to the best of my ability.[25]

Stephen's task could have been much easier if he had received co-operation from Tompkins and Dearborn, commander of the Northern Department. Although an armistice was signed in August between Major General Sheaffe and Stephen, which allowed both nations unhampered use of Lake Ontario to bring up troops and supplies to the Niagara frontier where Stephen had established his headquarters, Solomon claimed no reinforcements arrived until 4 September, the day the armistice ended. Yet Stephen had no ordnance larger than 6-pounders and he was begging for help for himself and for Hull's army, which was incarcerated at Fort George.[26] It is very clear that Dearborn and Tompkins were not overly eager to assist him.

Solomon, in a long letter to a friend, General Lewis, definitely claims that the Republicans were trying to sabotage Stephen's army.
Since the Surrender of General Hull, it has been the Study of John C. Spencer, Col. Brooks, Q. Mr. General Porter and Several others to cause confusion and distrust among the Troops on this Frontier to answer party purposes against the Commander. They have so far succeeded in the Camp and the Country, that in the former it is only whispered, but in the Latter it is openly said, that Gen. Van Rensselaer is a traitor to his Country and the Surrender of the Army when it crosses the River is the price of his Infamy. Honest and Honorable men must regret this depravity in human nature; those scoundrels know better, and you and I know that a more honest man does not exist; and one who has the Interest of his Country more at heart. But with all his amiable qualities, his usefulness here in my opinion is destroyed; by this unjust and unwarrantable jealousy. He cannot enforce that Subordination which is so necessary to the safety and glory of the Troops he Commands.[27]

Hampered though he was, Stephen was not idle. At Fort Niagara he removed the roof of the mess house, then mounted cannon on the roofless structure, and had a new battery constructed on the river bank. In addition he cut a new road away from the Niagara River in case he was forced to retreat–a plausible tactic if Brock's army should attack, since Stephen had negligible artillery support and the commanding engineer, Totten, had advised Stephen that Fort Niagara could never be made tenable.[28]

Dearborn finally realized that Stephen needed substantial assistance if, as he wrote Stephen, they were to "calculate on possessing Upper Canada before winter sets in."[29] Throughout September and October, Van Rensselaer's army was considerably reinforced with men and supplies.[30]

With this assistance Stephen began to plan an offensive. He decided upon a two-pronged attack with the regular forces leaving Fort Niagara to besiege Fort George and the militia to attack Queenston from Lewiston. An excellent plan that would have divided the smaller British forces, it depended, however, upon the assistance of Brigadier General Smyth's army, which was stationed at Buffalo. But Smyth refused to help and would not even meet Stephen to discuss the proposal.[31]

Unfortunately Stephen did not abandon the plan when Smyth failed to co-operate. Instead he succumbed to the pressure of his troops, who wanted to fight. Stephen claimed he was given an alternative by the men : they would fight or they would go home.[32] Accordingly Stephen altered his proposals : a combined force of regulars and militia would attack Queenston.

The first attack in the morning of 11 October was abortive because the first man to cross the river, Lieutenant Sim, apparently deserted, taking the oars of the other boats with him.

The second attack on 13 October nearly succeeded. Despite some understandable confusion at the place of embarkation, the first troops crossed successfully and captured the heights and redan in a brilliant manoeuvre. Unfortunately from that time onward, the American assault began to falter because Stephen did not understand logistics and because he was unable to inspire most of the New York militia to cross the river. Although there were 40 boats at Gill Creek,[33] Stephen did not bring them up to Lewiston, nor did he provide enough boats to ferry the men across the river. Furthermore he did not ensure that Lieutenant Totten would receive his entrenching tools so the Americans could fortify their position on the heights. He also failed to ensure that the attacking force would receive sufficient ammunition. Most important, though, was Stephen's failure to inspire the militia to participate in the battle.

Secretary of State Monroe called Van Rensselaer a "weak and incompetent man with high pretensions"[34] but there is more truth in Babcock's evaluation that, "He seems to have been a brave gentleman who was faced with a task to which his talents were not equal."[35] The amazing fact is that he came as close to succeeding as he did. Stephen should never have been offered the command of an army. When he offered his resignation after the disaster at Queenston, it was accepted.

His resignation from the army was not a resignation from public life. The Federalist party still wanted him as their gubernatorial candidate. Stephen lost by 3,600 votes out of the 83,000 votes cast,[36] a narrow margin for a recently defeated general.

Even this defeat did not end Stephen's public career. In 1817, he was elected to the state assembly with the highest number of votes cast for any of the candidates in that election. Stephen remained a member of the state assembly until his cousin Solomon resigned from his congressional seat to be Albany postmaster. In 1822, Stephen was elected to replace Solomon, remaining in Congress until he resigned on 4 March 1829.[37]

Generally Stephen made little impact upon Washington. On one occasion, however, he helped decide the course of American history for several years. In 1824, the four presidential candidates divided the votes cast so evenly that no one received a majority and the election was turned over to the House of Representatives in accordance with the Constitution. In the

House each state had one vote based upon the majority vote of the state delegation.

The friends of Crawford lacked but one of being half of the New York delegation, so that the diversion of a single vote from Mr. Adams would produce a tie. Gen. Van Rensselaer was, through his first wife, a brother-in-law to Gen. Hamilton, and had, at an early age, imbibed his dislike to the Adamses. He at no time entertained the idea of voting for Mr. Adams and communicated his views to me at an early period and without reserve.[38]

Nevertheless Stephen did break the tie in the New York delegation by voting for John Quincy Adams at the last moment. Supposedly he looked up after praying for guidance and saw a ballot with Adams written on it.[39] Stephen's vote decided the New York delegation in favour of Adams, who won the election by one state.

Stephen's major contribution to the United States was not, however, in politics: rather it was the numerous charitable and educational institutions he supported or founded. On 24 May 1818 Stephen gave 50 dollars to start a Sunday School in Ward 5 of Albany, and on 20 April 1837 he gave the ground for the new Third Dutch Church, to which he belonged. He also gave several acres of land for the Dudley Observatory.[40]

Stephen was also an officer of the following organizations:[41]

Member	Corporation of Williams College	19 May 1794
Director	Bank of Albany	12 May 1795
Manager	Bible Society	8 April 1811
President	Albany Lyceum of Natural History	no date
President	Albany Institute	5 May 1824 – 26 January 1839
Grand Master re-elected	Masonic Order	29 September 1825 1826
President	Orphan's Asylum	29 May 1834 – 26 January 1839
President	City Tract Society	4 August 1835
President	Albany Bethel Union	12 March 1836

Although he was obviously a man of diversified interests, the above organizations were of peripheral concern to Stephen. The majority of his time was devoted to canals and agriculture.

On 13 or 15 March 1810,[42] Stephen and several other gentlemen were appointed canal commissioners to consider means of improving New York's inland navigation. The commissioners made their first report on 2 March 1811, and a year later an act was passed to allow the commission to buy all the stock of the Western Inland Lock Navigation Company toward the eventual construction of a canal between the Hudson River and Lake Ontario. The Erie Canal was finally authorized on 15 April 1817, and when it was completed in 1825 Stephen had already served one year as president of the Canal Board. Elected in April of 1824, Stephen remained in that position until his death. From the very beginning he had supported the canal and it is partly due to his "foresight, personal influence and application" that the canal was realized.[43]

Stephen also devoted his time, wealth, and energy to improving agriculture in the state. In 1818, he was elected president of the New York Agricultural Society and began working for the creation of a state board of agriculture. The board was founded in 1820 with Stephen acting as president. At the same time he personally paid Amos Eaton to make a geological survey of the land along the proposed Erie Canal to determine the quality of the soil and the agricultural possibilities.[44]

Still unsatisfied, Stephen took even more positive steps to improve agriculture. On 5 November 1824, he founded the Rensselaer Institute of Troy, New York, to "qualify teachers for instructing the sons and daughters of mechanics, in the application of experimental chemistry, philosophy, and natural history, to agriculture, domestic economy, and the arts and manufactures." The school was incorporated in 1826 and became the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1849. Besides establishing this pioneer school, Stephen established a scholarship for one student from each county and a classical medal for Latin and Greek.[45]

This desire to combine education with agriculture is not surprising. Stephen had become involved with education when he was appointed to the board of regents of the University of the State of New York in 1819 and he was chancellor of the same institution from 1835 until his death.[46] Thus the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was a natural outcome of his position on the state agriculture board and the board of regents.

When Stephen died on 26 January 1839, the feudal era in New York State ended. In trying to collect the hundreds of thousands of dollars his tenants owed the estate, Stephen's sons touched off the Anti-Rent War which persisted until the constitutional convention of 1846 abolished all feudal tenures.[47]

Fortunately these disturbances could not obliterate the organizations to which Stephen had devoted his time; especially the Erie Canal and the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

The name of this gentleman can scarce be mentioned without a passing tribute to his merit. Blessed with great wealth, which so frequently leads to selfish egotism and exclusiveness, he has through his life been distinguished as an active and efficient public man; bestowing his personal services and his fortune, to the encouragement of every species of improvement in literature, science and art. His name as a benefactor is associated with most of the charitable and scientific institutions of the state, and he has perhaps done more than any other citizen to foster agriculture and internal improvements.[48]

Appendix A

Fort George February 8th, 1804

Dear Sir,
The subject of your letter of the 3rd Instant, has, I freely confess, laid me under considerable embarrassment. I shall notwithstanding disclose, without reserve, my whole thoughts, and leave General Hunter to form his own conclusions. I shall premise what I have to say by acknowledging the high opinion I entertain of Lieut. Colonel Sheaffe's private character, and tho' I am sensible that in many instances he has been very indiscreet and injudicious, I conceive nevertheless that, taking the whole of his public conduct together, he has shown great zeal, judgment, and capacity. His manner of addressing the men on the least invitation, must be allowed to be unfortunate, and to that failing must be attributed, in a great measure, the ill will which some men have expressed towards him. There is also another cause which out not to be omitted. Whenever the Command of the Regiment devolved by any absence on Colonel Sheaffe, he, unquestionably, required more from the non commissioned officers, than I knew was useless to expect from them. He did not sufficiently study the character of the men, and his ardent zeal made him seek with eagerness, after perfection where it was not to be found – Serjeants, for trifling errors, were too often reduced, or for such faults, which, had he considered that, they could be replaced only by men who were not likely to act with greater discretion, he would, however, he might have lamented the necessity, have passed over, by giving them a suitable admonition. He likewise perhaps was frequently tiresome in the exercise in the field, by which the men became disgusted with what they should have taken delight to practice –

His Excellency will, I presume, be satisfied, after what I have said, that Colonel Sheaffe's imperfections proceed immediately from an error in judgment. No man understands the duties of his profession better than Colonel Sheaffe, and to his abilities I own myself greatly indebted, but unfortunately he possesses little knowledge of mankind. I am willing to admit, however reluctantly, that his conduct has had some influence in producing the disgraceful transactions that occurred here. He reduced too many non-commissioned officers to leave a doubt on the subject. At the same time I am decisively of opinion that the source of the mischief did not flow from him. It is to be found in the situation of the place, and in the temptations which are perpetually offered to the unwary soldier. The reduced serjeants assisted very much, I believe, to project the dreadful plan, which was meditated, but I cannot bring myself to think, that any occurrence, beyond that single fact, in Colonel Sheaffe's treatment of the men, could have promoted in the smallest degree, the disposition, which, all of a sudden manifested itself towards desertion – The lesson which he has received while conducting the prosecution, will, I make no doubt, prove of the utmost use in correcting his present rude manner of speaking, and cannot fail of opening his eyes to the necessity of regulating his conduct to the times and place in which he may hereafter be engaged. – Assailed, as we undoubtedly are, on every side, by all kinds of evil, it is absolutely necessary to relax considerably from that strict discipline which, in other situations, would be our aim and pride to attain – He will now be sensible of the prudence of making this sacrifice in order to avoid greater mischief.
I cannot, after giving the subject full consideration, but recommend that the usual confidence be placed in Colonel Sheaffe, and that he should not undergo the mortification of being stationed where he necessarily must become second in command, as such an arrangement, under the existing circumstances, would be liable to be ascribed to motives which will rebound to his hurt, and his honour. –

Not having seen the General Court Martial, it is impossible that I should form a judgment in regard to any circumstance which has appeared in the proceedings, but as it is obvious that I cannot remain stationed forever with the Regiment, and as, in the natural course of events, he may, of a sudden, rise to the Command of the Regiment, it were to be desired that, if any thing goes to impeach his character, he may without delay be brought to account. Lt. Colonel Sheaffe has, I regret exceedingly to be obliged to observe, many enemies, who have been in the habit of propagating reports highly injurious to his character as an officer – I have every reason to think that he remains to this day ignorant of the injustice which has been done him,

unless indeed he has heard that, Corporal Carroll called upon three men with no other view than to accuse him of such infamy, they however, from honest motives, declined the office. It may be worthy remarking, that this Corporal never was on service with Colonel Sheaffe. I am aware that this unpleasing fact is already known to you. I need not here state whence it got its rise, and I allude to it only to show the necessity of acting in regard to Colonel Sheaffe with the utmost frankness. It is evident that through misrepresentation, and his disagreeable ways, he has greatly fallen in the estimation of the men. If therefore His Excellency withholds his countenance, and protection from him, or if I even appear to be sensible that he has given cause of dissatisfaction, he must inevitably fall to the ground, and become the scoff and ridicule of the whole Regiment – On the other hand if he is judged undeserving of support, no scruple should prevent his being told that the good of the Service calls for his removal.

Believe me, with great truth,
Your faithful and obedient Servant
Isaac Brock Lt. Col.
49 Regiment

Lt. Colonel Green[1]

Appendix B

Declaration of J. Rock, who had been a Sergeant in the 49th Regiment, and was considered the Ringleader of the Criminals.

2nd March, 1804
I acquit Lieut. Colonel Sheaffe of having ever treated me in any manner but what was strictly consistent with his duty as a Commanding Officer, and often has his treatment to me been very much savoured with leniency.
Further
Whatsoever appeared in Pope's and Quin's defences to his disadvantage, was principally my invention ; and acquits Serjeant Jones of the part alluded to him in Pope's defence... Lieutenant-Colonel Sheaffe's conduct had been more that of a father than a commanding officer.

Extract from W. L. Morland's Letter
Lieut-Col. Sheaffe,
Sir – My present unhappy situation will, I presume, sufficiently apologize for this intrusion. However contemptible I may appear, now the most degraded of mortals, and sunk in the lowest abyss of misery that will have no end till laid in my parent earth, yet let me wish you to believe that I always respected and revered you, Sir, as an officer of merit and humanity, from the many proofs I experienced while under your command. This panegyric is not meant as flattery, but the true effusion of a once callous heart, that is now open to the dictates of conscience and reason.[1]

Appendix C

Substance of a private and confidential conference with Colonel Van Ransselor....after some familiar conversation ; he threw off his reserve, laid particular stress on his wish, that our General should appear pacific in all his actions, how much Public opinion had changed in favor of Gt. Britain from the circumstance of her dignified forbearance in all Quarters, that he himself, and the General, were Federals, that at the approaching Elections he had no doubt of the Government being in their hands, that looking around to see no one was present he enjoined me to secresy, then declared the Gov't to be in the hands of a faction that the War was obnoxious to a Majority of People, that their (meaning the General and his own actions) actions [*sic*] were watched, mentioned the failure of the past months at Washington, and concluded by stating these were only hints, that fear alone detered him from stating other facts which would at once convince me the present Government could not exist he concluded by wishing the two Countries might soon be united in bonds of peace and amity, his manner and demeanor seemed to bespeak sincerity. I left him after obtaining his promise to furnish the General with regular foreign news thro' W. Dickson.

19th [illegible]
T.E.[1]

Appendix D

Van Rensselaer to Dearborn
H.Q. Lewiston, October 14th, 1812

Sir, –
As the movements of the army under my command since I had the honour to address you on the 8th, have been of a very important character, producing consequences serious to many individuals, establishing facts actually connected with the interest of the service, and the safety of the army; and as I stand prominently responsible for some of these consequences, I beg leave to explain to you, sir, and through you to my country, the situation and circumstances in which I have had to act, and the reasons and motives which governed me; and if the result is not all that might have been wished, it is such, that, when the whole ground shall be viewed, I shall cheerfully submit to the judgment of my country.

In my letter of the 8th instant, I apprised you that the crisis in this campaign was rapidly advancing; and that (to repeat the same) "the blow must be soon struck," or all the toil and expense of the campaign go for nothing, for the whole will be tinged with dishonour.

Under such impressions, I had, on the 5th instant, written to Brig. Gen. Smyth of the United States forces, requesting an interview with him, Majr. Gen. Hall, and the commandants of regiments, for the purpose of conferring on the subject of future operations. I wrote Maj. Gen. Hall to the same purport. On the 11th, I had received no answer from Gen. Smyth; but in a note to me of the 10th, Gen. Hall mentioned that Gen. Smyth had not yet then agreed upon any day for the consultation.

In the mean time, the partial success of Lieut. Elliott at Black Rock, (of which, however, I have received no official information) began to excite a strong disposition in the troops to act. This was expressed to me through various channels, in the shape of an alternative, that they must have orders to act, or at all hazards they would go home. I forbear here commenting upon the obvious consequences, to me personally, of longer withholding my orders under such circumstances.

I had a conference with _____, as to the possibility of getting some person to pass over to Canada, and obtain correct information. On the morning of the 4th, he wrote to me that he had procured the man who bore his letter, to go over. Instructions were given him; he passed over – obtained such information as warranted an immediate attack. This was confidentially communicated to several of my first officers, and produced great zeal to act; more especially as it might have a controlling effect upon the movement at Detroit, where it was supposed General Brock had gone with all the force he dared spare from the Niagara frontier. The best preparations in my power, were therefore made to dislodge the enemy from the heights of Queenstown, and possess ourselves of the village, where the troops might be sheltered from the distressing inclemency of the weather.

Lieut. Col. Fleming's flying artillery, and a detachment of regular troops under his command, were ordered up in season from Fort Niagara. Orders were also sent to Gen. Smyth to send down from Buffalo such detachment from his brigade as existing circumstances in that vicinity might warrant. The attack was to be made at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 11th, by crossing over in boats from the old ferry, opposite the heights. To avoid any embarrassment in crossing the river, (which is here a sheet of violent eddies) experienced boatmen were procured to take the boats from the landing below, to the place of embarkation. Lieut. Sim was considered the man of the greatest skill for this service; he went ahead, and, in the extreme darkness, passed the intended place far up the river, and there, in the most extraordinary manner, fastened his boat to the shore, and abandoned the detachment. In this front boat he had carried nearly all the oars which were prepared for the boats. In this agonizing dilemma stood officers and men, whose ardour had not been cooled by exposure through the night, to one of the most tremendous north-east storms, which continued unabated for twenty-eight hours, and deluged the whole camp. Col. Van Rensselaer was to have commanded the detachment.

After this result, I had hoped the patience of the troops would have continued, until I could submit the plan suggested in my letter of the 8th, that I might act under and in conformity to the opinion which might then be expressed. But my hope was idle; the previously excited ardour seemed to have gained new heat from the late miscarriage; the brave were mortified to stop short of their object, and the timid thought laurels half won by the attempt.

On the morning of the twelfth, such was the pressure upon me from all quarters, that I became satisfied that my refusal to act might involve me in suspicion, and the service in disgrace.

Lieut. Col. Christie, who had just arrived at Four Mile Creek, had late in the night of the first contemplated attack, gallantly offered me his own and his men's services; but he got my permission too late. He now again came forward, had a conference with Col. Van Rensselaer, and begged that he might have the honour of a command in the expedition. The arrangement was made. Col. Van Rensselaer was to command the column of three hundred militia, and Lieut. Col. Christie a column of the same number of regular troops.

Every precaution was now adopted as to boats, and the most confidential and experienced men to manage them. At an early hour in the night Lieut. Col. Christie marched his detachment by the rear road, from Niagara to camp. At 7 in the evening Lieut. Col. Stranahan's regiment moved from Niagara Falls; at 8 o'clock, Mead's and at 9, Lieut, Col. Bloom's regiment marched from the same place. All were in camp in good season. Agreeably to my orders issued upon this occasion, the two columns were to pass over; then Major Mullany's detachment of regulars, and the other troops to follow in order.

Col. Van Rensselaer, with great presence of mind, ordered his officers to proceed with rapidity, and storm the fort. The service was gallantly performed, and the enemy driven down the hill in every direction. Soon after this, both parties were considerably reinforced, and the conflict was renewed in various places. Many of the enemy took shelter behind a stone guard-house, where a piece of ordnance was now briskly served. I ordered the fire of our battery to be directed upon the guard-house; and it was so effectually done, that, with eight or ten shot, the fire was silenced. The enemy then retreated behind a large store-house; but, in a short time, the rout became general, and the enemy's fire was silenced, except from a one gun battery, so far down the river as to be out of reach of our heavy ordnance, and our light pieces could not silence it. A number of boats now passed over unannoyed, except by the one unsilenced gun. For some time, after I passed over, the victory appeared complete; but, in expectation of further attacks, I was taking measures for fortifying my camp immediately; the direction of this service I committed to Lieut. Totten of the Engineers. But very soon the enemy were reinforced by a detachment of several hundred Indians from Chippewa; they commenced a furious attack, but were promptly met and routed by the rifle and bayonet. By this time, I perceived my troops were embarking very slowly. I passed immediately over to accelerate their movements, but, to my utter astonishment, I found, that, at the very moment when complete victory was in our hands, the ardour of the unengaged troops had entirely subsided. I rode in all directions; but in vain. Lieut. Col. Bloom, who had been wounded in the action, returned, mounted his horse, and rode through the camp, as did also Judge Peck, who happened to be here, exhorting the companies to proceed – but all in vain.

At this time a large reinforcement from Fort George was discovered coming up the river. As the battery on the hill was considered an important check against their ascending the heights, measures were immediately taken to send them a fresh supply of ammunition, as I learned there were left only twenty shot for the eighteen-pounders. The reinforcements, however, obliqued to the right from the road, and formed a junction with the Indians, in the rear of the heights. Finding, to my infinite mortification, that no reinforcements would pass over, seeing that another severe conflict must soon commence, and knowing that the brave men at the heights were quite exhausted, and nearly out of ammunition, all I could do, was to send them a fresh supply of cartridges. At this critical moment I despatched a note to Gen. Wadsworth, acquainting him with our situation, leaving the course to be pursued to his own judgment, with assurance that, if he thought best to retreat, I would endeavour to send as many boats as I could command, and cover his retreat, by every fire I could safely make; but the boats were dispersed; many of the boatmen had fled panic struck, and but few got off. My note, however, could but little more than have reached Gen. W., about 4 o'clock, when a most severe and obstinate conflict commenced, and continued about half an hour, with a tremendous fire of cannon, flying artillery, and musketry. The enemy succeeded in repossessing their battery, and gaining advantage on every side. The brave men who had gained the victory, exhausted of strength and ammunition, and grieved at the unpardonable neglect of their fellow soldiers, gave up the conflict.

I can only add, that the victory was really won, but lost for the want of a small reinforcement; one third part of the idle men might have saved all.[1]

Endnotes

The Battle

1 David B. Read, *The Lieutenant-Governors of Upper Canada and Ontario, 1792-1899* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), p. 81.

2 J. Mackay Hitsman, *The Incredible War of 1812: a Military History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 47; ibid., pp. 77-81.

3 Henry Adams, *History of the United States of America During the First Administration of James Madison* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1909), Vol. 2, p. 340. General Brock had gone to Amherstburg to drive Brig. Gen. Hull out of Upper Canada.

4 Henry Adams, op. cit., p. 343. Van Rensselaer refers to the armistice signed on 8 August by Prevost and Dearborn because the British government had cancelled the Orders in Council, the ostensible reason for the United States declaring war on Great Britain. The armistice ended on 4 September.

5 Ernest Alexander Cruikshank, *Queenston Heights: A Thrilling Narrative of the Famous Battle where General Brock died Defending His Country* (hereafter cited as *Battle of Queenston Heights*), (Welland: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1890), p. 9.

6 Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812, cited in John Russell, Jr., *The History of the War, Between the United States and Great-Britain, which Commenced in June, 1812, and Closed in Feb. 1815; . . .* (Hartford: B. & J. Russell, 1815), p. 179; Henry Adams, op. cit., p. 346.

7 J. Mackay Hitsman, op. cit., p. 86.

8 Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812, cited in John Russell, Jr., op. cit., pp. 179-80.

9 William Wood, ed., *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812* (hereafter cited as *Select British Documents*), (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1920), Vol. 1, p. 618, Lt. Col. T. Evans, Government House, Fort George, 15 October 1812; William H. Merritt, *Journal of Events Principally on the Detroit and Niagara Frontiers, During the War of 1812* (St. Catharines: Historical Society, 1863), p. 15.

10 Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812, cited in J. Russell, Jr., op. cit., pp. 180-1.

11 Canada. Public Archives (hereafter cited as PAC), RG8, Vol. 677, p. 131, Brock to Prevost, Fort George, 11 October 1812.

12 Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812, cited in J. Russell, Jr., op. cit., pp. 181-2.

13 Gilbert J. Hunt, *The Late War, Between the United States and Great Britain, From June, 1812, to February, 1815. Written in the Ancient Historical Style. Containing also, a Sketch of the Late Algerine War: and the Treaty Concluded with the Dey of Algiers: Commercial Treaty with Great Britain, and the Treaty concluded with the Creek Nation of Indians*, 3rd ed., (New York: G. J. Hunt, 1819), p. 36.

14 Solomon Van Rensselaer, *A Narrative of the Affair at Queenstown; in the War of 1812. With a Review of the Strictures on that Event, in a Book Entitled, "Notices of the War of 1812,"* (New York: Lord and Co., 1836), Appendix, p. 65, Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812; Chrystie to Cushing, Albany, 22 February 1813. Cited in John Armstrong, *Notices of the War of 1812* (New York: Wiley and Putnam, 1840), Vol. 1, p. 210.

15 Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 211, J. Chrystie to Gen. T. H. Cushing, Albany, 22 February 1813.

16 Based on the topography of Queenston and several descriptions of the landing and subsequent events.

17 John Richardson, *Richardson's War of 1812, with Notes and a Life of the Author by A. C. Casselman* (hereafter cited as *Richardson's War*), (Toronto: Historical Publishing Co., 1902), p. 107.

18 PAC, MG24, K2, Vol. 12, pp. 84-98, letter written by a member of York Militia, Brown's Point, 14 October 1812; John Armstrong, op. cit., Vol. 1, pp. 211-2, J. Chrystie to Gen. T. H. Cushing, Albany, 22 February 1813.

19 Ernest A. Cruikshank, *Battle of Queenston Heights*, p. 11; J. G. Currie, "The Battle of Queenston Heights," *Niagara Historical Society Records*, Vol. 4 (1898), p. 15; *The Quebec Gazette*, 19 November 1812.

20 William Wood, ed., *Select British Documents*, p. 621, Lt. Col. T. Evans, Government House, Fort George, 15 October 1812; John Richardson, *War of 1812, First Series. Containing a Full and Detailed Narrative of the Operations of the Right Division of the Canadian Army, by Major Richardson, K.S.F.*, (hereafter cited as *War of 1812*), (Brockville: n.p., 1842), p. 61; Ernest A. Cruikshank, "The Battle of Queenston Heights," in Morris Zaslow, ed., *The Defended Border: Upper Canada and the War of 1812, a Collection of Writings Giving a Comprehensive Picture of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada* (hereafter cited as "The Battle"), (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964), p. 24.

21 Ernest A. Cruikshank, "The Battle," p. 34.

22 William Wood, ed., *Select British Documents*, p. 623, Lt. Col. T. Evans, Government House, Fort George, 15 October 1812.

23 Gilbert J. Hunt, op. cit., p. 37.

24 Gilbert Auchinleck, *The War of 1812. A History of the War Between Great Britain and the United States During the Years 1812, 1813, and 1814* (Toronto: W. C. Chewett and Co., 1862), p. 112, Wool to Colonel Van Rensselaer, Buffalo, 23 October 1812; Louis L. Babcock, *The War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier* (Buffalo: Buffalo Historical Society, 1927), p. 48; Francis Wayland Campbell, *The War of 1812-13-14 Between Great Britain and the United States. A Lecture Delivered at the Montreal Military Institute and Before the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Montreal in February 1899, by Francis Wayland Campbell* (Montreal: A. Pelletier, 1899), p. 12.

25 Louis L. Babcock, op. cit., p. 48; Ernest A. Cruikshank, "The Battle," p. 35.

26 Gilbert Auchinleck, op. cit., p. 111, Wool to Col. Van Rensselaer, Buffalo, 23 October 1812; J. Mackay Hitsman, op. cit., p. 88; PAC, MG24, K2, Vol. 2, pp. 84-98, York Militia, Brown's Point, 14 October 1812.

27 Gilbert J. Hunt, loc. cit. (Invincibles was a nickname for the 41st Regiment, which appeared on the battlefield later).

28 There are various spellings for this name. This version is according to Lukin Homfray Irving, *Officers of the British Forces in Canada During the War of 1812-15* (Welland: Welland Tribune, 1908), p. 8; PAC, MG24, K2, Vol. 12, pp. 84-98, York Militia, Brown's Point, 14 October 1812.

29 John Armstrong, op. cit., p. 213, Chrystie to Cushing, Albany, 22 February 1813; *The Quebec Gazette*, 29 October 1812, Letter from young militia officer, Brown's Point, 15 October 1812; John Armstrong, loc. cit., Chrystie to Cushing, Albany, 22 February 1813.

30 Henry M. Brackenridge, *History of the Late War Between the United States and Great Britain Comprising a Minute Account of the Various Military and Naval Operations* (Philadelphia: James Kay, Jun. and Brother, 1844), p. 69.

31 Gilbert Auchinleck, op. cit., p. 111, Wool to Col. Van Rensselaer, Buffalo, 23 October 1812.

32 PAC, RG8, Vol. 1, 168, p. 323, General Orders, H.Q., Montreal, 21 October 1812; J. Russell, Jr., op. cit., p. 185, Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812.

33 PAC, RG8, Vol. 1, 219, p. 169, "Return of ordnance and stores captured from the enemy at Queenston in U.C. . . . on the 13th October 1812."

34 John Armstrong, op. cit., pp. 215-6, Chrystie to Cushing, Albany, 22 February 1813; ibid., p. 104; Henry M. Brackenridge, op. cit., p. 70.

35 Gilbert J. Hunt, loc. cit.

36 J. G. Currie, op. cit., p. 18; Gilbert Auchinleck, op. cit., p. 105.

37 PAC, MG24, G39, pp. 10-2, James Crooks, "Recollections of the War of 1812"; *The Quebec Gazette*, Supplement, 31 October 1812, Letter from G. R. to father, Brown's Point, 14 October 1812.

38 Joel T. Headley, *The Second War with England* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1853), p. 103; John Armstrong, op. cit., p. 105.

39 Louis L. Babcock, op. cit., p. 50. (Fort Drummond is a small earthwork fortification built later in the War of 1812.)

40 Ernest A. Cruikshank, *The Documentary History of the Campaign upon the Niagara Frontier in the year 1812* (hereafter cited as *Documentary History*), (Welland: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1897), Vol. 2, p. 86; John Lovett to Joseph Alexander, 14 October 1812.

41 William H. Merritt, op. cit., p. 17.

42 Gilbert J. Hunt, op. cit., p. 38.

43 PAC, MG24, G39, pp. 13-4, J. Crooks, "Recollections of the War of 1812."

44 John Armstrong, op. cit., p. 217, Chrystie to Cushing, Albany, 22 February 1813.

45 John Russell, Jr., op. cit., p. 184, Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812.

46 John Armstrong, op. cit., p. 106.

47 Ernest A. Cruikshank, *Documentary History*, Vol. 2, p. 92, Colonel Mead's statement, *Albany Argus*, 30 March 1813; William H. Merritt, op. cit., p. 17.

48 William J. Wood, ed., *Select British Documents*, Vol. 1, pp. 615-6, J. B. Robinson, Brown's Point, 14 October 1812.

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50 PAC, MG24, G39, pp. 8-9, J. Crooks, "Recollections of the War of 1812."
51 PAC, MG11, Vol. 351, (Q Series, Vol. 118), p. 290, General Order, H.Q., Montreal, 21 October 1812; Henry M. Brackenridge, op. cit., p. 72; PAC, MG11, Vol. 351, (Q Series, Vol. 118), p. 290, General Order, H.Q., Montreal, 21 October 1812; William J. Wood, ed., *Select British Documents*, p. 624, Lt. Col. T. Evans, Government House, Fort George, 15 October 1812.
52 Adolphus Egerton Ryerson, *The Loyalists of America and Their Times from 1620 to 1816* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1880), Vol. 2, p. 371; PAC, MG11, Vol. 351, (Q Series, Vol. 118), pp. 289-90, General Order, H.Q., Montreal, 21 October 1812.
53 PAC, MG11, Vol. 352, (Q Series, Vol. 119), p. 16, "Return of killed, wounded and prisoners of war in the action at Queenstown Niagara on the 13th October 1812."
54 John Russell, Jr., op. cit., p. 185, Stephen Van Rensselaer to Dearborn, Lewiston, 14 October 1812.
55 PAC, RG8, Vol. 1, 220, p. 234, "Return of Ordnance and Ordnance Stores that have been captured from the enemy since the commencement of hostilities in Canada: At the Ba 'le of Queenstown 13th October 1812"; James C. Morden, *Historical Monuments and Observatories of Lundy's Lane and Queenston Heights* (Welland: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1929), pp. 85-7.
56 PAC, MG11, Vol. 352, (Q Series, Vol. 119), pp. 14-5, "Return of killed, wounded and missing of the army under the command of Major General Isaac Brock in the action at Queens-Town Niagara on the 13th October 1813"; Louis L. Babcock, op. cit., p. 52.
57 PAC, MG11, Vol. 778, (Q Series, Vol. 316), p. 251, Brock to Brothers, Niagara, 18 September 1812.
58 Matilda Edgar, *General Brock* (Toronto: Morang and Co., 1904), pp. 275-6.
59 Charles P. Stacey, "The Defence of Upper Canada," in: Morris Zaslow, ed., op. cit., p. 19.

Sir Isaac Brock

1 Canada, Public Archives (hereafter cited as PAC), MG24, A1, Vol. 1, p. 141, Baptismal certificate; PAC, MG25G, A71, Brock Genealogy Chart.
2 Ferdinand Brock Tupper, *The Life and Correspondence of Major-General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1847), pp. 4-5.
3 Great Britain, War Office, *A list of the Officers of the Army and Marines; with an Index: A Succession of Colonels and a List of the Officers of the Army and Marines on Half-Pay; Also with an Index* (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1795), p. 198.
4 Walter R. Nursey, *The Story of Isaac Brock (General Sir Isaac Brock, K.B.) Hero, Defender and Saviour of Upper Canada in 1812* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1923), p. 34.
5 Ferdinand Brock Tupper, op. cit., p. 8.
6 Ibid., p. 20.
7 PAC, RG8, Vol. 2, p. 122, R. Brownrigg to Hunter, Horse Guards, 18 September 1802.
8 Ferdinand Brock Tupper, op. cit., p. 26.
9 PAC, RG8, Vol. 923, pp. 12-6, Brock to Lt. Col. Green, Fort George, 8 February 1804.
10 Matilda Edgar, *General Brock* (Toronto: Morang and Co., 1904), p. 63; PAC, RG8, Vol. 923, p. 21, Brock to ?, Fort George, 2 April 1804.
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13 PAC, MG24, A1, Vol. 1, pp. 83-9, Brock's proposal submitted to Horse Guards in 1806.
14 Ibid.
15 Matilda Edgar, op. cit., p. 73.
16 PAC, RG5, A1, Vol. 5, Pt. 2, p. 2044, Brock to Gore, Quebec, 27 September 1806.
17 Matilda Edgar, op. cit., p. 75.
18 PAC, MG11, (Q Series, Vol. 104), pp. 63-4, J. Green to Dunn, Quebec, 23 July 1807.
19 Ibid., p. 58, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 17 July 1807.
20 Ibid., pp. 56-61, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 17 July 1807, and Council Minutes, 22 July 1807.
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23 Ibid., p. 98, Council Minutes, 23 July 1807.
24 Ibid., pp. 101-3, Council Minutes, 25 July 1807.
25 Ibid., p. 202, General Order, Quebec, 9 September 1807; PAC, MG24, B10, p. 298, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 18 August 1807.
26 Matilda Edgar, op. cit., p. 94.
27 PAC, MG24, B10, p. 203, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 13 April 1807; Ibid., pp. 203-16, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 13 April 1807, 18 May 1807, 20 May 1807, Dunn to Windham, Quebec, 6 June 1807.
28 Ibid., p. 210, Dunn to Windham, Quebec, 6 June 1807.
29 PAC, RG8, Vol. 923, pp. 12-6, Brock to Lt. Col. Green, Fort George, 8 February 1804. Brock accused Sheaffe of lacking any insight into human nature, implying that he had that elusive quality.
30 PAC, MG24, B10, p. 212, Dunn to Windham, Quebec, 6 June 1807. For additional proof of Dunn's obsequiousness *see* PAC, MG11, Vol. 335 and PAC, MG24, B10.
31 Matilda Edgar, op. cit., p. 79; *also* PAC, RG8, Vol. 354, pp. 91-3, W. Lane to Lt. Col. Green, Quebec, 28 November 1806.
32 PAC, MG24, B10, pp. 179-87, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 2 May 1807, 4 May 1807, 6 May 1807.
33 Ibid., pp. 179-81, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 2 May 1807.
34 PAC, RG8, Vol. 599, pp. 66-8, Dunn to Brock, Castle St. Lewis, Quebec, 5 May 1807; PAC, MG24, B10, pp. 185-7, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 6 May 1807; Ibid., pp. 182-4, Brock to Dunn, Quebec, 4 May 1807.
35 PAC, MG11, Vol. 335, p. 244, Dunn to Castlereagh, Quebec, 14 October 1807.
36 PAC, RG8, Vol. 164, p. 84, Brock to Major Green, York, 14 July 1803; Ibid., Vol. 923, p. 37, Brock to Lt. Col. Green, Quebec, 24 September 1804.
37 Ibid., Vol. 226, p. 60, Gordon to Craig, Horse Guards, 6 June 1808; Matilda Edgar, op. cit., p. 99.
38 Ferdinand Brock Tupper, op. cit., pp. 73-4, Brock to Brothers, Quebec, 19 November 1808.
39 PAC, MG11, Vol. 778, p. 238, Enclosure John Savery Brock to Bathurst 28 November 1812.
40 Ibid., pp. 241-2, Brock to Brothers, York, 30 October 1811. In this letter Brock refers to his brothers Daniel and Savery, his nephew and nieces, William Potenger and "the girls," and to the remuneration he received as President of Upper Canada as of 9 October 1811.
41 Ibid., pp. 242-3, Brock to Brothers, Lake Ontario, 3 September 1812.
42 Matilda Edgar, op. cit., p. 135.
43 Walter R. Nursey, op. cit., p. 211.
44 Ibid., p. 84.
45 PAC, RG8, Vol. 228, p. 21, Brock to Prevost, York, 12 February 1812.
46 Ibid., Vol. 30, p. 24, Lt. Col. Torrens to Craig, Horse Guards, 18 June 1811; Ibid., Vol. 688A, pp. 1-3, Draft of Brock's Proclamation.
47 William M. Weekes, "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada," in: Morris Zaslow, ed., *The Defended Border; Upper Canada and the War of 1812, A Collection of Writings Giving a Comprehensive Picture of the War of 1812 in Upper Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1964), p. 194; PAC, RG8, Vol. 677, pp. 1-4, Brock to Col. Baynes, York, 4 August 1812.
48 David B. Read, *The Lieutenant-Governors of Upper Canada and Ontario, 1792-1899* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1900), p. 82; Ibid., p. 83; PAC, RG8, Vol. 676, pp. 92-6, Brock to Prevost, York, 25 February 1812; Ibid., pp. 236-8, Brock to Prevost, York, 29 July 1812; Ibid., pp. 92-6, Brock to Prevost, York, 25 February 1812; Ibid., Vol. 677, pp. 64-7, Brock to Prevost, Fort George, 7 September 1812.
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50 PAC, RG8, Vol. 676, pp. 239-41, Brock to Col. Baynes, York, 29 July 1812.
51 PAC, RG5, A1, Vol. 15, pp. 6149-53, Bishop Mountain to Brock, Quebec, 9 April 1812; Ibid., pp. 6281-4, Mountain to Brock, Quebec, 28 May 1812.
52 David B. Read, op. cit., p. 82.
53 PAC, MG11, Vol. 777, pp. 4-12, Brock to Earl of Liverpool, York, 23 March 1812.
54 PAC, RG8, Vol. 676, pp. 217-8, Brock to Prevost, York, 28 July 1812; Ibid., pp. 229-31, Addresses to Legislative Council and House of Assembly, 28 July 1812.

55 William M. Weekes, "The War of 1812: Civil Authority and Martial Law in Upper Canada," in: Morris Zaslow, ed., op. cit., p. 193.
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A History of Fort George, Upper Canada

by Robert S. Allen

Abstract

Fort George was built between 1796 and 1799 and subsequently served as British military headquarters in Upper Canada. During the War of 1812 the post was engaged in several artillery duels with Fort Niagara across the river on the American side, and was the site of a fierce battle and two sieges. Although by 1815 Fort George was in a state of decay and disrepair, British troops continued to garrison the fort until the 1830s, when the star-shaped fort at Mississauga Point became the major military installation of His Majesty's forces in the Niagara area. The work of reconstruction was begun in 1937 by the Niagara Parks Commission and completed in 1940. Fort George was transferred to the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1969 and declared a national historic park.

With the outbreak of hostilities at Lexington and Concord in 1775, both the British and the Americans endeavoured to secure Indian assistance. In Boston, the commander in chief of the British forces in North America, Major General Thomas Gage, urged such a policy; and Colonel Guy Johnson, nephew and son-in-law of the late Sir William Johnson and recently appointed Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department, perceived that various measures were being taken by "New England Missionaries and others to alienate the affections of the Indians and Spirit them up to bad purposes."[1] Most of the tribes, however, gravitated toward Great Britain rather than the colonies. The king, as represented by the British Indian Department, had a history of just dealings with the native peoples. Indeed, the principal duty of the British Indian agents had been to protect the various tribes from acts of aggression or depredation by the white settlers.[2]

The American Revolution along the western frontier thus became, as had other white confrontations there, an Indian war. The tribes waged war in an attempt to retard the advance of American migrants, and to secure the native life style of nomadic hunting and fishing. The conflict was cruel and bloody. The wanton destruction of property and the indiscriminate slaughter of women and children at Cherry Valley, Gnadenhutten, Standing Stone village, and the well-publicized torture of Colonel Crawford all illustrate this frontier barbarism.[3] With the long contest nearing its completion, the Indians won two successive and decisive battles at Sandusky and Blue Licks in June and August of 1782.[4] These victories, and in particular the latter in which the legendary Daniel Boone was among the routed, seemingly assured the preservation of Indian culture in the "Old Northwest." But in Europe, Britain was terminating a costly and unpopular war, and the boundary provisions of the Treaty of Paris gave to the United States this entire region which the Indian tribes had just successfully defended.[5]

The news of the treaty had a traumatic and immediate effect upon the tribes which feared the loss of their lands and American retaliation. "The Indians are Thunderstruck," wrote Frederick Haldimand, governor of Quebec, "At the appearance of an Accommodation so far short of their expectations from the Language that had been held out to them, and Dread the idea at being forsaken by us, and becoming a Sacrifice to a Vengeance which has already in many instances been raked upon them."[6] Shocked and angered, the tribes argued that they were the faithful allies of the King, but not his subjects. Therefore, "he had no right whatever to grant away to the United States, their rights or properties without a manifest breach of all Justice and Equity, and they would not submit to it."[7]

The British garrison commanders did their utmost to convince their former native allies that England had not forsaken them, but there was a general fear that the Indians, embittered by the treaty, would attack the western posts. The horrible memories of the Pontiac Rebellion just 20 years earlier kept the British officers alert and cautious. In

spite of the constant and sincere efforts of the British officers and Indian agents to establish amicable relations between the Americans and the Indians, depredations continued.

As a result of the continuation of violence on the frontier, Haldimand devised a binding policy for the defence of British North America, but more particularly for the weakly defended and unpopulated upper province of Quebec. In a letter of explanation in November 1783 to Lord North, the Governor indicated that such a disastrous event as an Indian war, which would result in death and destruction for the Indian tribes and for British and Americans alike, "cannot be prevented so effectually as by allowing the posts to remain as they are for some time . . . the intermediate country (the limits assigned to Canada by the Provisional treaty of 1782 and those established north west of the River Ohio in 1768 [by the Treaty of Fort Stanwix]) should be considered entirely as belonging to the Indians."[8] This was the crucial proposal to retain the posts indefinitely and preserve the Ohio valley as a convenient Indian buffer state between the upper province of Quebec and the advancing American frontier.

The traditional argument of many American historians that Britain continued to hold the posts for the sake of preserving the British fur trade monopoly is not supported by the facts. The northwest fur trade yielded an annual revenue of only £200,000 of which two-thirds came from the American side of the boundary.[9] From the British standpoint the financial loss would be minimal, as it did not matter whether the furs were gathered by British or American traders because the pelts would still find their way to London, the great emporium for the trade. Thus British manufacturers would still profit and the only sufferers would be the British traders in Canada. But again, the loss to the traders in Canada would not be drastic because the larger portion of the furs gathered in American territory would pass through Montreal, which possessed natural advantages over American ports in the east, owing to its easy access by lake and river. The total cost of retaining the posts, by contrast, was estimated at £800,000 per year.[10] From a purely financial or economic standpoint, it was in the interest of Britain to deliver the posts to the Americans as soon as possible. Therefore, one must seek other reasons for Britain's violation of the treaty.

The retention of the posts was owing primarily to a British error and secondarily to an American weakness. One of the most striking blunders in the whole history of British imperial policy was the utter neglect of the Indians in the peace negotiations with the United States. When news of the proposed boundary provisions of the treaty reached British North America in April 1783, the violent reaction of the merchants, army officers and especially the Indians caused a reappraisal of western policy in Whitehall. Although committed to the treaty, the British devised a new policy based on two objectives. One was to persuade the Indians that their interest lay in coming to terms with the Americans. The second, proposed in Quebec and accepted at Whitehall, was to restore the shattered confidence of the Indians in the British. Herein lay the dilemma, since to achieve one objective was to destroy the other.

The British violation of the treaty passed through several stages. Originally the retention of the posts was intended to be temporary and to cover the liquidation of British fur-trading interests south of the boundary line; then, it was to prevent another Pontiac revolt which would have taken the lives of many British, Americans and Indians; and finally, a ready excuse was found to postpone the evacuation indefinitely when, in violation of articles of the treaty, Americans failed to pay their debts to British creditors and confiscated Loyalist properties.[11]

As well, the weakness of the central government of the new republic was a vital stimulant for British retention of the western posts. Working under the Articles of Confederation, the federal government of the United States had neither the financial means nor the authority to stop the migration of American backwoodsmen, or to devise a uniform land and Indian policy. The backwoodsman, the natural enemy of the Indian, encroached on Indian lands and atrocities were

exchanged. The British, by retaining the posts, aided the Loyalists trekking to the upper province of Quebec, renewed the allegiance of the Indians, checked American expansion and, of vital significance, bought time to entrench monarchical institutions in the frontier of British North America and thus prevented the region from being engulfed by American republicanism.

The British were prepared, however, to leave the posts as early as 1789. By then, the upper province had gained a semblance of order and stability; the United States had adopted its constitution which gave the central government the power to inaugurate a realistic and binding land and Indian policy; the fur trade had shifted to the far northwest beyond Lake Superior, and the outbreak of the French Revolution caused more important politico-constitutional problems for Britain and forced colonial problems in America into the background. The final blow was the battle of Fallen Timbers, 20 August 1794, which shattered the last remnants of Indian resistance in the Ohio valley. The Jay Treaty quickly followed in November of that year and the British evacuated the posts in June of 1796, no doubt happy to be relieved of the responsibility and cost of maintaining order on the northwestern frontier of the United States.[12]

After the surrender of the disputed western posts, British military forces in Upper Canada were reduced as an era of Anglo-American cordiality was seemingly assured. This left only 500 men of the Queen's Rangers and Royal Canadian Volunteers to garrison Kingston, York, and the replacement forts that were to be constructed in Canadian territory: Fort St. Joseph on the island of that name in the mouth of St. Mary's River; Fort Malden, at Amherstburg on the Detroit River, and Fort George, across the river from Fort Niagara.[13]

The location of Fort George, on the west bank of the Niagara River, was carefully chosen. The post was approximately one mile from Lake Ontario and adjacent to the little town of Newark, which until 1796 was the seat of the provincial assembly. Major Robert Matthews, military secretary (1778-86) to Haldimand and his successors, made an official tour of inspection of the western frontier posts for the purpose of preparing a special report on the subject of the contemplated evacuation for the information of the colonial secretary. Matthews reported in 1787,

I went from Quebec to Detroit having various instructions from Lord Dorchester, one of which was to make every possible enquiry respecting places of Embarkation and fit Posts upon the Lakes Ontario and Erie as substitutes for those at present occupied, in the event of their being given up to the United States of America. From the best information as well as from my former knowledge of the Country, I found that on Lake Ontario there is no place beyond Niagara fit for that purpose nearer to it than Toronto. There is a point of land, on our side of the River, opposite to Niagara which forms the mouth of the River, equally well situated to command the entrance of it – about 1100 yards up the River, on the same side there is a harbour where the vessels formerly wintered and where they can run alongside a Quay.[14]

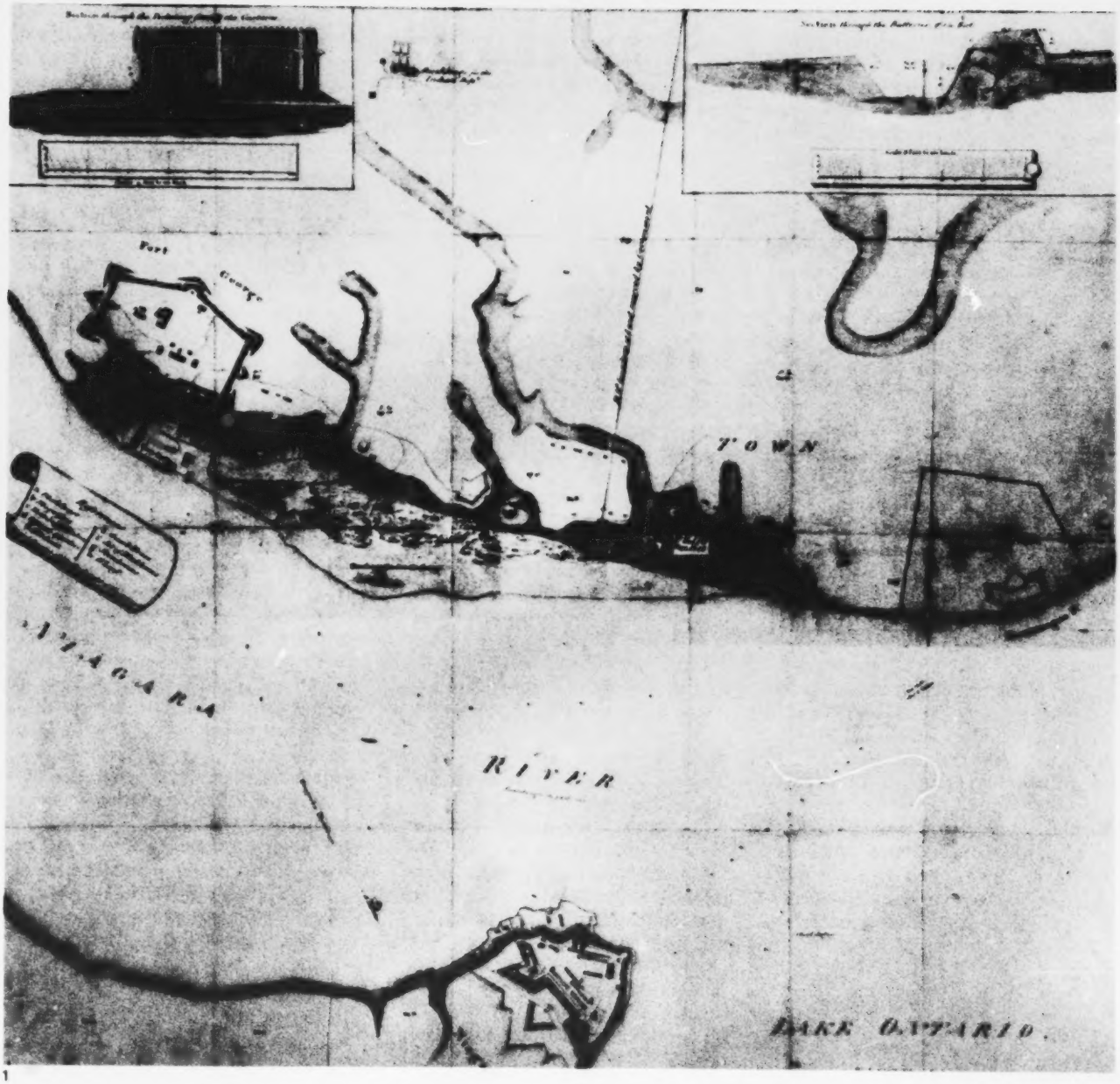
As further insurance, the British in 1792 negotiated a land treaty with the local Mississauga Indians in which the natives, for £1180 75s. 4d., released to His Majesty and heirs and successors "All that tract of parcell of land lying and being between Lakes Ontario and Erie beginning at Lake Ontario four miles south westerly from the point opposite to Niagara fort known by the name of Messissague [*sic*] point."[15]

Isaac Weld, an English traveller, described the Niagara Peninsula as it was in 1797.

At Niagara we were landed at Mississagua Point an agreeable walk of a mile to the town, many Indians present, 70 houses, Court House, Jail and a building intended for Legislative bodies....On the margin of the river three quarters of a mile from the town stands Navy Hall, opposite it a spacious wharf, adjoining it extensive stores belonging to the crown and private persons....The new block house at Fort George is nine feet higher than the top of the stone house at Fort Niagara and commands every part of the fort. It is proposed to erect a fort at Mississagua Point, a still better situation than the block house.[16]

Although Weld described the Fort George blockhouse in 1797, the construction of the new British post was painstakingly long and tedious. In May 1799, ice flowing in immense quantities down the Niagara River from Lake Erie made it impossible to get the logs down to the site. However, Lieutenant

1 The Niagara Peninsula military triangle, circa 1812, showing the relationship between Fort George, Fort Niagara and Mississauga Point.
(*Public Archives of Canada*.)



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Colonel John Macdonell, the military commandant, noted that the works of defence which had begun in the spring were going well, and the progress made on the earthworks of the several batteries was particularly encouraging.

In July construction was continuing with increasing rapidity and two of the bastions were nearly cased. The pickets had finally arrived, and Macdonell speculated that two sides of the work would be enclosed very soon; he hoped that the whole would be completed quickly. The engineer, Macdonell continued, was indefatigable and the troops were working cheerfully, in spite of the stench from the nearby marsh.[17]

A temporary setback occurred, however, when 6,000 of the pickets, which were delivered to the fort for enclosure, were found to be smaller in diameter than the required 5 to 8 inches. These pickets were insufficiently strong and inadequate to cover the proposed perimeter. A further supply of larger pickets was hurriedly obtained and by the autumn of 1799, Fort George was completed.[18]

This first Fort George consisted of six small bastions faced with framed timber and plank, and connected by a line of cedar picketing 12 feet in height. Circling the entire fortification was a shallow dry ditch. The solid earth bastions were floored with planks in order to provide durable platforms for heavy cannon, and the parapets were pierced with numerous gun embrasures. Two roads led to the fort passing through the northwest and southeast gates, each of which was protected by a triangular outwork called a redan. The southeast entrance was soon considered as an unnecessary source of weakness and was closed sometime prior to the War of 1812. As Isaac Weld had indicated earlier, the post was located in a strategically poor position since it neither commanded the entrance of the Niagara River nor protected the town of Newark. But the British theorized that by building at Mississauga Point they would have been more readily exposed to the guns of the more impressive stone and brick fort on the American side of the Niagara River.

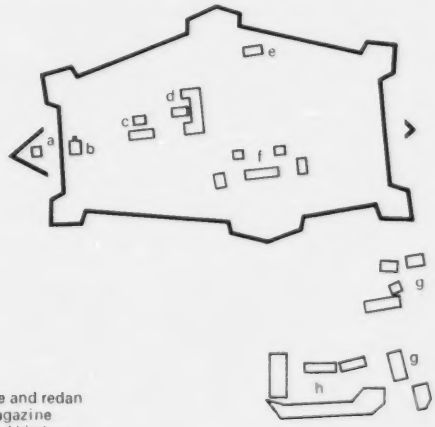
Within the fort were five defensible barrack buildings or blockhouses. All the blockhouses were two stories high, constructed of thick squared logs and possessing splinter-proof roofs. There was also a small octagonal blockhouse in the southeast redan which could provide additional protective fire. A stone powder magazine was constructed, but although arched and enclosed by a thick, high embankment of earth to protect it from cannon fire, it was not considered bomb-proof. In addition the post included a spacious building for the officers, a kitchen, hospital, guardhouse and storehouse. (*See* Fig. 2).

"The situation is pretty," wrote traveller John Maude in 1800. "The fort new and remarkably neat, built on the edge of a handsome green or common skirted by a few tolerable houses. The Garrison consisted of the Queen's Rangers and Canadian Volunteers. Although a warm day the officers were playing fives. They were on good terms with the American officers."[19]

This peace and tranquility was shattered, however, by the renewal of war between Britain and France in 1803. A year earlier, during the short-lived peace of Amiens, the British army in North America, as an austerity measure, had disbanded the several provincial corps and the Queen's Rangers, leaving only the newly arrived 49th Regiment of Foot to garrison the widely scattered posts in Upper Canada. The commander of this unit was the youthful and energetic Colonel Isaac Brock.[20]

For the rank and file of British regiments of foot, garrisoning frontier posts was a lonely and boring ordeal. The poor pay and excessively strict discipline resulted in frequent desertions, particularly when there was easy access across the border to the United States. In the autumn of 1803, a full-fledged mutiny almost broke out at Fort George. The post commander at that time was Lieutenant Colonel Roger Hale Sheaffe, whose harsh measures were not popular with the men. The plan of the mutineers was to place the officers in cells, then march to Queenston and cross the river into the state of New York; the murder of Sheaffe was contemplated as well. The plot was discovered accidentally when the servant of an officer of the Royal Artillery met a soldier of the 49th who asked him the hour. On being informed the soldier muttered some threatening obscenity regarding Sheaffe and ran to the fort. The servant reported the incident to his officer who went to Sheaffe. The soldier was summoned and questioned, and showing signs of guilt was

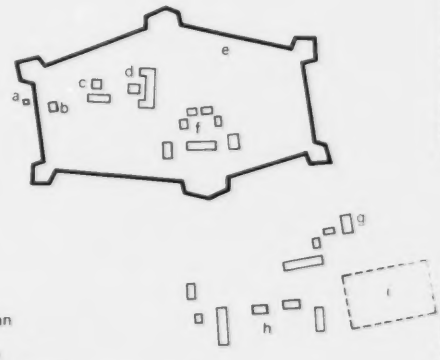
2 British plan of Fort George : 1799.
(*Public Archives of Canada*)



a blockhouse and redan
b powder magazine
c hospital and kitchen
d officers' quarters and kitchen
e guardhouse
f blockhouse barracks
g storehouses
h Navy Hall complex
i Indian Council House and buildings for the British Indian Department

2

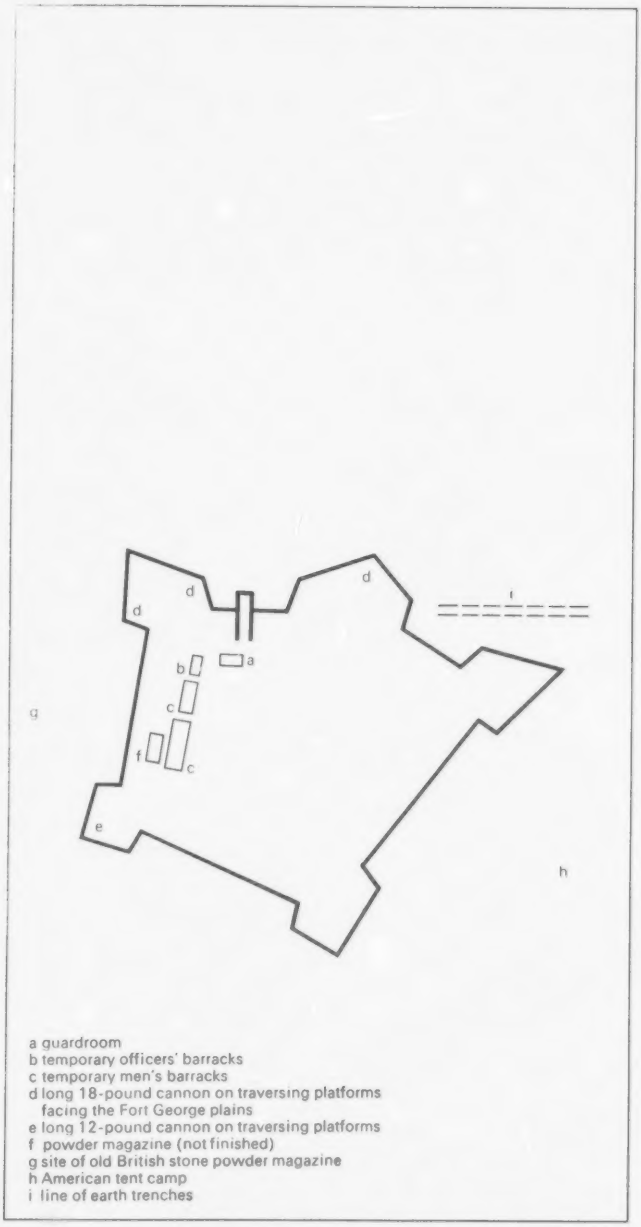
3 British plan of Fort George : 1812.
(*Public Archives of Canada*)



a blockhouse and redan
b powder magazine
c hospital and kitchen
d officers' quarters and kitchen
e guardroom apparently dismantled or never built
f blockhouse barracks (note two additional buildings)
g storehouses
h Navy Hall complex
i wood yard
j Militia of Upper Canada tent camp
k Indian Council House and buildings for the British Indian Department
l Indian village site

3

...an plan of Fort George: 1813.
...Archives of Canada.)



a guardroom
b temporary officers' barracks
c temporary men's barracks
d long 18-pound cannon on traversing platforms facing the Fort George plains
e long 12-pound cannon on traversing platforms
f powder magazine (not finished)
g site of old British stone powder magazine
h American tent camp
i line of earth trenches

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detained in a guardroom cell. Another soldier then openly confessed to the conspiracy and said he had been persuaded by a sergeant of the 49th, who told him that he and his wife and children would be much more comfortable in the United States than in the regiment. A despatch was promptly sent to Colonel Brock at York who hurried down to Fort George and through a combination of rhetoric and force quelled the proposed mutiny. Twelve mutineers who had been apprehended from the Fort George affair and seven deserters from York were sent to Quebec for trial. They were found guilty and four of the mutineers and three of the deserters were condemned to be shot on 2 March 1804. The sentences were carried out, and upon reading the announcement of the executions to the men of the 49th, Brock displayed such emotional distress that the entire parade was visibly moved, and several soldiers in the ranks declared a determination never to disgrace the regiment again. Soon after this unfortunate incident Brock took over command at Fort George, and put into practice more humane methods of treating the common soldier. The men were allowed, under proper restrictions, to visit the town freely; they could also fish in fatigue dress, and shoot wild pigeons if they provided their own powder and shot.[21]

By the summer of 1804, a calm had apparently returned to the frontier garrison at Fort George. In a letter of thanks the poet Thomas Moore wrote: "To Colonel Brock of the 49th who commanded at Fort George and to the officers I am particularly indebted for much kindness during the fortnight I remained at Niagara."[22] However, the problems of discipline and morale were still serious, and a solution was set forth in a submission made by Brock to Field Marshall H. R. H. Frederick, Duke of York, commander in chief, All His Majesty's Forces, early in 1806. The suggestion was that a veteran battalion of older soldiers of good character and long service toward a pension could assume garrison duty at the lonely frontier posts, as they were unlikely to desert. The advice was accepted and a 10th Royal Veteran Battalion was formed for service in North America. This unit arrived in Canada the following summer and began its garrison duties.[23] About this same time, George Heriot, deputy postmaster general of British North America, provided a fairly full and interesting description of Fort George and its environs while on tour. *On the western bank, about a mile higher up the river* [than Fort Niagara], *the British fort is situated on ground several feet more elevated than the last. It is likewise constructed of earth and cedar pickets, and the buildings contained in it are executed with much neatness, taste, and accommodation. On the border of the river, and beneath the fort, there are several buildings consisting of storehouses and barracks, one of which is called Navy Hall, and is contiguous to a wharf, where vessels load and unload. A swamp in the vicinity becomes, at particular seasons, from the stagnated vapours exhaled from it, prejudicial to the health of those whose residence is by the river, and sometimes to that of troops in the garrison. A plain, whose extent in every direction is near a mile, intervenes between the town of Niagara and Fort George, the name of the fortress already described.*[24]

The "Chesapeake Affair" of June 1807, however, abruptly destroyed this unruffled scene. H.M.S. *Leopard* had attacked the U.S.S. *Chesapeake* at sea, only 8 miles off the Virginia coast, for refusing to permit a search for British deserters. The death of three Americans, the wounding of eighteen others, and the removal of four alleged deserters from the crippled *Chesapeake* aroused and united American public opinion in a demand for a redemption of national honour.[25] The bellicose American reaction and the fear of reprisals caused a "war scare" in the weakly defended British settlements of North America. By October traveller Charles Prenline observed considerable activity around Fort George, where a large number of troops were stationed and under very strict discipline. Also the arrival of Lieutenant General Sir James Craig as captain general and governor in chief of British North America brought some degree of unity and solidarity to the British defence plan. Craig had secret instructions from Lord Castlereagh, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, which were quite specific. They commenced by expressing the hope that the crisis might be resolved amicably. If not, the British government would adopt the "most vigorous and Energetic Measures" to bring the Americans to their senses.[26] Craig's own conduct of the defence of the Canadas was spelled out clearly, in line with the strategy that had been

5 The British fort at Niagara. An 1806 painting by George Heriot. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

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evolving over the years and that placed ultimate reliance upon possession of the fortress of Quebec. "Your first object will be to preserve Quebec, to which all other considerations must be subordinate."[27]

Upper Canada was thus left in a rather precarious situation. A strength return for that province of 11 November 1808 showed 24 sergeants, 22 drummers and only 411 rank and file.[28] A worried Francis Gore, lieutenant governor of Upper Canada, wrote Craig and proposed a defence strategy for the upper province. "In case of war with the United States," Gore argued, "we must control the lakes, send detachments from Fort George to Amherstburgh to check the American threat from Detroit, and use the Indians."[29]

Ever since the evacuation of the western posts in 1796, the British Indian Department had been based in British territory at Fort St. Joseph, Fort Malden and Fort George. After the Chesapeake crisis of 1807, the department had been instructed by Castlereagh to cultivate and renew Indian friendship in the event of open hostilities erupting between Britain and the United States.[30] But the Indians had learned two bitter lessons in 1783 and 1794 when the British had abandoned their native allies to the mercy of American expansion. Thus, at a large gathering in the council house outside Fort George in August of 1808, the Indians told William Claus, deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, that "They are in great distress for Bread...But, that they had come to a Determination to sit quiet in case of any quarrel between the King and America, and not to spill the Blood of the white men, yet their friendship for the King was firm." In fact at two further meetings in March, 1809, a month after Gore's letter to Craig, the Indians complained vehemently about the difficulties they were having with the white men in the British settlement at Newark who had settled on their lands, stolen their hogs, worked their horses, given them no redress and told the Indians that they possessed no land.[31]

By June, 1811, the various pressures of office, coupled with the constant threat of war with the United States, forced the aging and sick Sir James Craig into voluntary retirement. In order to familiarize Sir George Prevost, Craig's successor, with the military and defensive situation in Upper and Lower Canada, a detailed "Report of the State of the Fortified Posts in Both the Canadas" was prepared by Lieutenant Colonel Bruyères of the Royal Engineers.

In the present situation of the posts in Upper Canada, there is not one situation that can be considered safe as a depot. The works are faced and lined with wood, the bastions connected by palisades. The buildings are of wood, liable at all times to accident by fire, and within the power of an enemy to be burnt whenever he chose to undertake it.

A depot at a distance from the frontier is much wanted, where the powder, ammunition, field pieces, small arms and naval stores not immediately wanted might be kept in more safety, and where an establishment might be formed for making and repairing carriages, and other purposes essential to the service...York seems to present a situation well adapted for such a purpose.

In regard to Fort George specifically, Bruyères stated, "the whole of this work is very much out of repair, and its situation and construction very defective, and cannot be considered capable of much defense."[32]

Also at this same time the Royal Artillery issued a report on the state of the field artillery in the Canadas. Fort George, with its three officers and twenty-one gunners, was considered the principal military station and depot in Upper Canada. The guns at the post consisted of "Six 12-pounders, three 9-pounders and one mortar, all of iron ; of brass, one 12-pounder, five light 6-pounders, four 3-pounders and a 5½ inch howitzer with cars ; five cast iron mortars with carriages and harness."[33]

Sir George Prevost, on 13 September 1811, assumed his duties as captain general and governor in chief of British North America. With the threat of war imminent, Prevost was anxious for additional troops but the bitter and costly Peninsular War in Spain against the French, and the necessity of maintaining troops in South Africa, India, Ceylon, and other outposts of the Second British Empire, meant that the military manpower available in North America was the most that Sir George

6 Brock at Fort George, 1812, by J. D. Kelly
(*Public Archives of Canada*)

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Prevost could expect. The British regulars and fencibles immediately available in the Canadas totalled roughly 5,600 effectives, but only 1,200 were garrisoning the widely scattered posts in Upper Canada, the most exposed to attack.[34]

The enthusiastic Brock, recently promoted to the rank of major general, disliked the existing defensive concept that Upper Canada would have to be abandoned in the face of an American invasion. In a long letter to Prevost, he argued that,

A strong stand could and should be made. If the western Indians were supplied by the British and encouraged to make war, the Americans would be kept too busy to threaten Upper Canada. But before we can expect an active co-operation on the part of the Indians the reduction of Detroit and Michilimackinac must convince that people, who conceive themselves to have been sacrificed in 1794, to our policy, that we are earnestly engaged in the War.[35]

The following February Brock withdrew his application for leave, "being now placed in a high, ostensible situation, and the state of public affairs with the American Government indicating a strong presumption of an approaching rupture." Throughout the spring of 1812, Brock was in constant communication with Prevost discussing defensive strategy as well as recruiting and training Canadian militia.[36]

Before Prevost had a chance to visit Upper Canada and personally assess the defence preparations, he received a letter from the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies requesting a detailed appreciation of the military situation in North America. Prevost's lengthy reply included an appraisal of Fort George.

A temporary field work at the head of Lake Ontario, now repairing to render it tenable, but in its most improved State, it cannot make much resistance against an Enemy in considerable force. The Garrison consists of about 400 men of the 41st Regiment, Commanded by Colonel Procter. In event of Hostilities it would be highly advantageous to gain possession of Fort Niagara to secure the navigation of the river.[37]

The long expected outbreak of hostilities commenced on 18 June 1812 when the United States declared war on Great Britain and proceeded to invade Canada. According to popular legend, the news of the war reached Fort George during a dinner held in honour of the American officers at Fort Niagara. The British officers insisted that the evening be completed, and then accompanied the Americans to their boats where there was much handshaking and expressions of comradeship, although both sides knew that they would soon face one another as enemies.[38]

In the summer of 1812, the picturesque hamlet of Newark consisted of 2 churches, a court house and jail, an Indian council house, an academy in which Latin and Greek were taught, a printing house, 6 taverns, 20 stores and about 100 dwellings of brick, stone or neatly painted wood. The population was estimated at between 500 and 600. The decaying Fort George, adjacent to the town, served as the principal British post on the Niagara frontier and as general military headquarters for Upper Canada (*see* Fig. 3).[39]

Brock's first reaction to the news of the war had been to undertake offensive preparation. But remembering the repeated instructions of Prevost to adhere to the defensive strategy approved of earlier, he contented himself with assembling and organizing the militia in the Niagara peninsula which turned out cheerfully to the number of 800 men to supplement the 400 regulars of the 41st Foot garrisoning Fort George. There were no tents, blankets, kettles, and even the lack of muskets was overlooked by most militiamen in their initial enthusiasm to do something.[40] Brock estimated that there were 1,200 American regulars and militia mobilized along the opposite shore; in reality the equally confused commander of the small American garrison at Fort Niagara expected hourly to be attacked and was frantically pleading for reinforcements. The British victory at Michilimackinac in mid-July, however, persuaded Brock, in spite of the danger to the Niagara sector, to lead detachments of the 41st and Canadian Militia to Amherstburg, which had been menaced by the Americans under Brigadier General William Hull since 12 July.

At Detroit, Hull was beset with difficulties. The Indians had cut off his supply lines, his officers distrusted him, and the Michigan militia was dissolving. General Brock, supported by the Indians under Tecumseh, effected a bold crossing of the Detroit River and demanded the surrender of the town. Hull, who was also the governor of Michigan Territory, was responsible for the welfare of its inhabitants. The menace posed by the Indians of the Northwest had undoubtedly become an obsession with him and he feared for the safety of the women and children. With these problems weighing heavily upon him, Hull surrendered on 16 August 1812.[41]

The successes at Michilimackinac and Detroit provided a quick and decisive reversal of the military situation, and credit must be given in large measure to the Indian allies whose presence was vital to the British war effort in the opening months of the war. Also, these victories encouraged the Indians already on the British side, won over the waverers and made neutrals of those who might have joined the Americans. In September, Brock wrote to Prevost that the Six Nations at Grand River, which had earlier professed neutrality, were assembling in great numbers at Fort George. "They appear ashamed of themselves," wrote Brock, "and promise to whipe away the disgrace into which they have fallen by their late conduct."[42]

Throughout September and October of 1812, both the British and Americans concentrated on military preparations along the Niagara River. The American area commander, Major General Van Rensselaer wrote to his superior that,

The enemy continue their operations with great activity, fortifying their camp at Fort George in every direction. Seven of the 24-pounders taken at Detroit are there mounted, part on travelling carriages.[43]

The British were expecting an American invasion across the Niagara River at any moment, and at Fort George the enemy was watched with unceasing vigilance. An order was issued on 2 October directing one-third of the troops "to sleep with their clothes fully accoutred and ready to turn out at a moments notice." By 6 October, the whole of the regulars and militia were to be under arms by the first break of day and they were not to be dismissed until full daylight. By 12 October all communications with the enemy were forbidden, unless expressly authorized by the commanding general.[44]

The American invasion of the Niagara Peninsula finally commenced on 13 October. Awakened at Fort George by the sound of the American guns supporting the crossing from Lewiston, Brock waited until he was certain the real attack was not aimed at Fort George, and then mounted his horse and rode toward Queenston Heights. The Americans had already gained a foothold on the heights, and more were crossing the river to the British side. Brock, with the small contingent available on the scene, rashly decided to attempt a dislodgement of the American forces established on the slope. The little British force with Brock at its head charged up the hill. His imposing figure made an easy target and an American sharpshooter's bullet pierced his left breast. He died almost immediately. Major General Roger Sheaffe had followed behind Brock with reinforcements from Fort George. The British, supported by Indian allies, flanked the Americans, burst through the woods, and succeeded in forcing the Americans on the heights to surrender.[45]

While the battle at Queenston was raging, the guns at Fort George had been duelling all morning with those of the opposing Fort Niagara. The Americans turned the whole of their artillery upon Fort George and the neighbouring village with such disastrous effect that in a few minutes the jail and court house and 15 or 16 other buildings were set on fire by the red-hot shot from the American guns only 900 yards away. Finally, the Fort George batteries under the direction of Brigade Major Evans succeeded in silencing Fort Niagara and forced the enemy to abandon their posts.[46]

After the battle of 13 October, an armistice of indefinite length was agreed upon by the two combatants. Three days later an impressive burial ceremony was performed at Fort George, and the gallant Isaac Brock was interred in the northeast or "Brock" bastion with a 24-pounder American cannon captured at Detroit at his head. In 1824 the body of Brock was removed from the Fort George bastion, and laid to final rest below the Queenston Heights memorial.[47]

Throughout the autumn of 1812, the British along the Niagara River prepared for a second American attack.

The Enemy appears to be busily employed in preparing for another attack, and I believe, has received reinforcements and supplies of various kinds. We are yet employed in raising works for the protection of the interior of Fort George – the Magazine is considered secure from the effect of hot shot.[48]

The armistice was officially terminated on 20 November 1812. The British resolved to open fire on Fort Niagara immediately in order to cripple it and thereby prevent its use as a base for any proposed early attack on Fort George. The cannonade commenced at 7:30 A.M., 21 November, from Fort George.

During the day the enemy ceased firing at different periods in order to extinguish fires from our heated shot and to obtain supplies of ammunition. A well directed shell burst upon the enemy's North blockhouse and the gun there was dismounted and abandoned. About eleven the old building at Navy Hall, occupied as a garrison mess room was set on fire by the

enemy's battery at Youngstown and entirely consumed. From the many excellent shells thrown and the general judicious direction of our fire much serious injury must have been done to the enemy's works and barracks. Captain Holcroft reported that several of their killed and wounded were observed to be removed from Youngstown to the fort. At 5 P M , it being nearly dark, the enemy ceased firing.[49]

The American fire and expenditure was great but ill-directed, and the collected enemy shot exceeded that fired by the British. The damage to the buildings in Fort George could be repaired in two or three days, and none of the guns or earthworks had been injured. The death of an ex-captain of Butler's Rangers, the aged Barent Frey, was lamented. He was killed while collecting shot "to be sent back to the Americans."[50] Except for a small skirmish at Frenchman's Creek later in November, the campaign on the Niagara Peninsula for 1812 had come to an end. The Union Jack still flew over the decaying cedar picketing of Fort George, and the post as British military headquarters in Upper Canada would be vital in the spring, when the Americans would attack again.

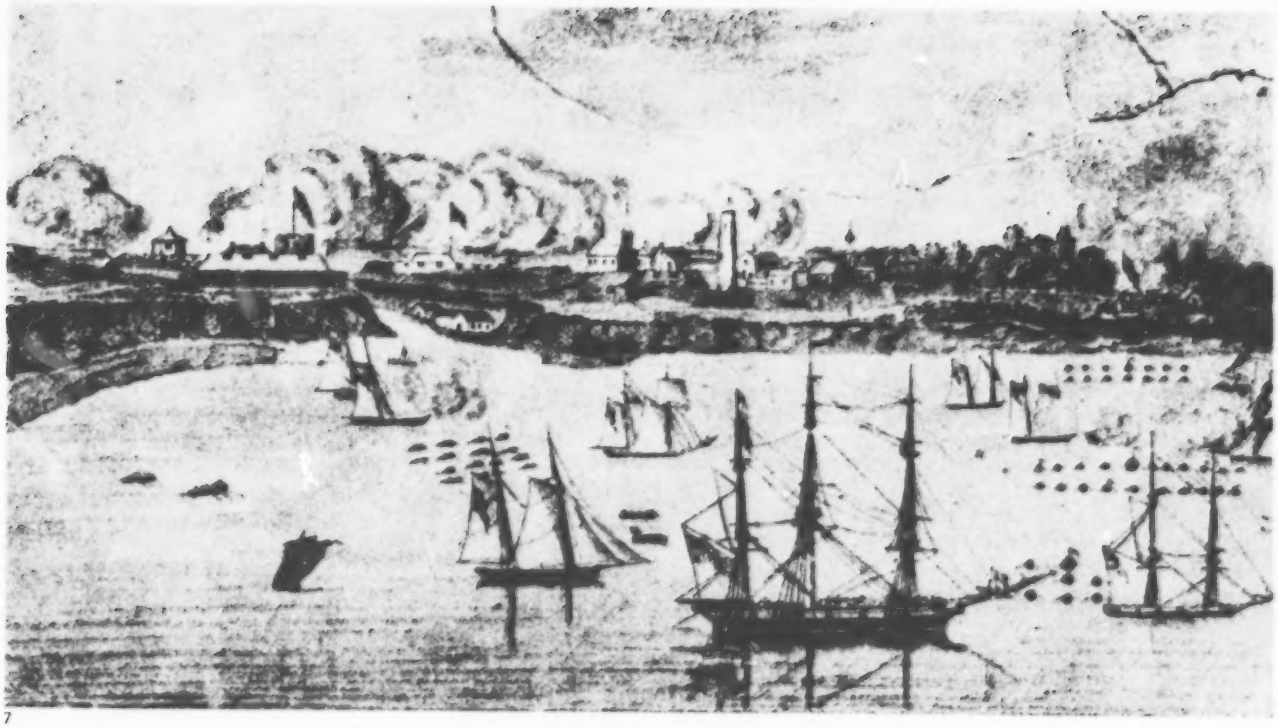
The problem of strengthening the ruinous and unfinished defences of Fort George was given serious attention by Lieutenant-Colonel Bruyères of the Royal Engineers. In February, 1813, he recommended that the wooden lines of the stockade be replaced with solid earth ramparts in order to afford adequate protection against cannon fire. Secondly, he suggested that the upper storeys of the blockhouses be taken down to the level of the terreplein as they were too exposed to the enemy guns at Fort Niagara. Finally, he urged that the cluster of public buildings and storehouses at Navy Hall should be removed from the river bank to prevent their complete destruction in the event of an attack.[51]

The American grand strategy for 1813 was a three-pronged programme. The capture of Kingston was the first objective, the seizure of York and destruction of the ships there was the second, and the reduction of Fort George and Fort Erie on the Niagara River was the third. York was captured on 27 April. The American fleet then proceeded to Fort Niagara on 8 May and landed the troops that had been employed in the reduction of the provincial capital. For several days these troops paraded ostentatiously in open view, in the hope of overawing their opponents by the display of numbers. Many workmen were seen at the same time busily occupied in building boats and constructing new batteries along the river. Reinforcements continued to arrive daily until it was supposed that about 7,000 soldiers were encamped between Lewiston and Fort Niagara. This force was composed almost wholly of regular troops that had been in service for some time and included nine of the best regiments of infantry in the United States army.[52]

Brigadier General John Vincent had lately assumed command of the British forces on the Niagara front, consisting of the 49th Regiment, five companies of the 8th, three of the Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles, two of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, and a captain's command of Royal Artillery with five field guns, numbering in all about 2,000 officers and men. In addition, Merritt's troop of provincial cavalry, Robert Runchey's company of coloured men, a company of militia artillery, and an uncertain and fluctuating number of militiamen belonging to the five Lincoln Regiments were available.[53] Vincent was plagued with difficulties. The undisturbed control of Lake Ontario by the enemy fleet, their numerical superiority, and the dilapidated defences of Fort George gave the Americans a considerable advantage. As the British fleet would not be able to leave Kingston for another week, the Americans could select the point of attack at will.

Early in the morning of 25 May 1813, the Americans commenced a heavy bombardment against Fort George. Their fire was wholly successful and every log building in the fort was burned down and the British guns were effectively silenced.[54] The lake front of the British position was then closely reconnoitred by boats from the enemy fleet, sounding the shore in every direction and placing buoys to mark the stations the ships were to occupy the next day. As for the British, some ineffectual efforts were made to repair the damages of the morning. The tackle and carriage of the gun at the flagstaff in Fort George had been totally destroyed by the flames and could not be replaced. Only a small picket was stationed in the fort during

7 Sketch of the opening phase of the battle of Fort George, the morning of 27 May 1813. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



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the night, and the remainder of the garrison lay upon their arms on the common, about one-half mile in the rear, in hourly expectation of an alarm.

Shortly after reveille had sounded the next morning, a rocket was seen to rise into the air from Fort Niagara and a single gun was fired at Fort George. This was the signal for all the American batteries to begin a cannonade, which was not returned and ceased at the end of half an hour. The morning was calm and very foggy, though clearing at intervals, and the enemy was seen approaching. The landing and battle which ensued is described in vivid detail by Brigadier General Vincent in a report to Prevost the following day.

15 vessels covered 100 large boats each containing 50-60 men; the point of attack could only be conjectured. The enemy recommended heavy firing from his fort and ships. It became necessary to withdraw all guards and piquets stationed along the coast between our fort and the lighthouse, and a landing was effected at Two Mile Creek. A party of troops and Indians opposed the enemy for a time but were obliged to fall back as the enemy fire from the ships so completely enfiladed and scoured the plains that it became impossible to approach the beach. As day dawned every effort to oppose the enemy landing had failed. Therefore no time was lost in concentrating the British forces on a position between the town, Fort George and the enemy. This movement was admirably covered by the Glengarry Light Infantry, joined by the Royal Newfoundland Regiment and Militia, which commenced skirmishing with the enemy riflemen advancing through the brushwood. The enemy had a perfect command of the beach, and quickly landed 3,000-4,000 men and pieces of artillery. This force instantly advanced in three solid columns along the lake bank. The British light troops fell back to the main body and were supported by the 8th under Major Ogilvie, the whole right division being under the command of Colonel Myers who was wounded three times and succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel Harvey who brought up the 49th. The enemy advanced under cover of their ships and batteries from which the British position was immediately seen and exposed to tremendous fire of shot and shells. Therefore, it was decided to retire to a safer position. We waited for the approach of the enemy for one hour. Received information that the enemy had reformed and was attempting to turn the British high flank.

Every effort had been made to maintain the post of Fort George. However, the contest was so unequal and promised no advantage for His Majesty's service that about 12 [noon] *gave orders for the fort to be evacuated, the guns to be spiked and the ammunition destroyed. The troops were put in motion and marched toward Beaver Dams where a depot of provisions had been formed some time since .... continued the march towards the head of the lake where it is my intention to take up a position, and I shall endeavor to maintain it until I receive your instructions.*[55]

The British had suffered considerable casualties: 52 killed and 306 wounded or missing. The American army had only 40 killed and 120 wounded, but otherwise had little to show for its assault on Fort George. Vincent's force was far from being destroyed and was encamped at Burlington Heights by the time the American army was ordered in pursuit on 1 June.[56] This advance was effectively and decisively checked by the British and their Indian allies at Stoney Creek, the Forty, and Beaver Dams. The occasional appearance of the British fleet off Newark was an added deterrent, and made the Americans wary of venturing into the inhospitable Canadian woods. By the end of June, 6,000 American soldiers were huddled behind their lines at Fort George where sickness, discontent, and famine prevailed.

However, the Americans were firmly in control of the wreckage of the old fort as well as the town of Newark, and in order to secure their gains they constructed a new fort. The remains of the British fort consisted only of the solid earth bastions and the stone powder magazine. The conquerors therefore built a second fort upon the north end of the original works. This fortification occupied about one-half of the old area. It contained five full bastions connected by earthen curtains – a much more substantial arrangement than the former British stockade. Inside the new defences were three log barracks for the troops

and a crude earth and log powder magazine; the old British stone building was left outside the new walls. In addition to the new earthworks the Americans constructed a line of trenches extending from the northwest bastion along to St. Mark's Anglican church, then southeast to the river bank. The new fort thus formed the left of an extensive and well-protected enclosed camp. The main portion of the American army was bivouacked in a tent camp situated behind the trenches and between the fort and the church (*see* Figs. 3 and 4).

Early in July the British were within a few miles of Fort George, but the American encampment was not considered in any danger as its breastworks, batteries and defences were very formidable and commanding. Nonetheless, the Americans hardly ventured out more than two or three miles, and as a result of the overcrowded conditions, the army was very unhealthy. The sick and some of the cannon and baggage were removed to the other side of the river, "for they are in constant dread of an attack and are continually alarmed."[57]

Throughout the summer of 1813 the British Indians provided invaluable service in the woods about Fort George where their raids on American pickets kept the enemy constantly on guard. The American General Peter B. Porter unwittingly paid an eloquent tribute to the Indians when he wrote disgustedly,

We have an army at Fort George which for two months past has lain panic-stuck, shut up and whipped in by a few hundred miserable savages leaving the whole of this frontier, except the mile in extent which they occupy, exposed to the inroads and depredations of the enemy.[58]

The British siege of Fort George dragged on throughout the summer and was uneventful until the arrival of Sir George Prevost, who decided to go to the Niagara Peninsula and observe the situation for himself. On his arrival, he found,

2,000 British soldiers on an extended line cooping up in Fort George an American force exceeding 4,000 men. Being desirous of assertaining the extent of the enemy's works and viewing the means he possessed of defending the position a general attack was ordered. I found myself close to the fort, and the new entrenched camp which is formed to the right of that work, both of them crowded with men, bristling with cannon and supported by the fire from Fort Niagara on the opposite side of the river. No provocation would induce the Americans to leave their places of shelter. I am now satisfied that Fort George is not to be reduced strengthened as it is and supported by Fort Niagara.[59]

After this curt appraisal, Prevost returned to Kingston late in August, leaving the inhabitants of the Niagara Peninsula and the rank and file of the army in impatient idleness.

Kingston had been the keystone to American military strategy in 1813. By early October, American strength along the Niagara frontier had been dangerously reduced to support the expedition. As a counter-measure the British hurried troops to the St. Lawrence region, leaving only 500 effectives on the Niagara front. This small British force retired to Burlington Heights, thus ending the blockade of Fort George.

The American commander at Fort George, Brigadier General George McClure, with the assistance of the hero of Tippecanoe and the Thames, Major General William Henry Harrison, decided "upon a cordial co-operation against the enemy at Burlington Heights. We shall dislodge them from this stronghold."[60] After a considerable correspondence and preparation, Harrison, to the disgust of McClure, decided to call off the projected expedition because the enemy had removed to Kingston and little remained at Burlington Heights; Commodore Chauncey was worried, as it was dangerous to navigate on the lake at this late season; and Sackets Harbor might be endangered and troops must be sent there quickly before the winter freeze.[61] The British contingent at Burlington Heights augmented by about 1,000 Indians, had made preparations to resist the American advance. They had felled trees in the road and formed "chevaux de frise," destroyed the bridges, and constructed breastworks on the beach and elsewhere.

By 10 December 1813, McClure had only about 100 men to continue the defence of Fort George. The rest of the American army, composed mostly of militia, had drifted away on the expiration of their period of enlistment, or deserted because of the cold weather, sickness and boredom. McClure received information that the enemy was advancing in strength. He held a council and it was agreed that Fort George was not tenable with the remnants of the force left in it; thus he gave orders to evacuate the fort and return to the American side of the river.[62] Before departing the Americans fired the town of Newark, leaving the inhabitants in some difficulty and want for the remainder of the winter, and also largely excluding the British army from wintering in the vicinity of Fort George.

The British advance was described by Colonel John Murray, who led the assault.

The enemy evacuated Fort George, burnt Newark and precipitately crossed the river and abandoned the whole of the Niagara frontier. The cannon and stores have been removed, but the attempt to destroy the fortifications which are evidently so much strengthened whilst in his possession, has failed...the enemy might have maintained a regular seige against the British, but such was his apparent panic that he left the whole of his tents standing.[63]

The following day the American cannon were found in the snow-filled ditches of the fortifications where they had been apparently thrown, as well as an immense quantity of shot and camping equipment.

Late in December the British crossed the river and captured Fort Niagara. Then, in retaliation for the destruction of the town of Newark, they laid waste the American shore and burned Buffalo and Black Rock. Prevost issued a proclamation on 12 January 1814, deprecating the need for such action but assuring the inhabitants of Upper Canada that they would be "Powerfully assisted at all points by the troops under His Excellency's command, and that prompt and signal vengeance will be taken for every fresh departure by the Enemy, from that system of warfare which ought alone to subsist between enlightened and civilized nations."[64] For the duration of the war the British retained control of the mouth of the Niagara River. The capture of Fort Niagara was important because it allowed the British in the spring of 1814 to commence unhindered the construction of Fort Mississauga (or Riall) opposite Fort Niagara. These two forts, together with Fort George, gave them a strong triangle of fortifications which effectively controlled the entrance to the river and allowed the landing of troops and provisions in relative safety.

Fort George was of immediate concern to Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond, the new British commander in the Niagara sector. "I consider it advisable that it should be put into a respectable state of defense, which, as the works are not materially impaired, can be done in the spring without much labor or expenses."[65] The renewal of military operations was to commence in the spring, and the greatest activity prevailed in repairing Forts George and Niagara, and building Fort Mississauga. "This [last] fort completely commands the entrance of the Niagara River. So long as we keep the lake the enemy could only have possession temporarily of some part of the frontier. Every person now turned out with more zeal and confidence than at any former period."[66]

Events in Europe in the spring of 1814 were encouraging to Prevost and those concerned with the defence and security of British North America. The abdication of Napoleon at Fontainebleau on 11 April made it possible to send seasoned British Peninsular War veterans to the Canadas. Also of significance was the mistaken decision taken by the American cabinet to direct again the main war effort in 1814 against the northwest and the Niagara Peninsula, instead of against Kingston or Montreal. British military preparations along the Niagara River were, as usual, inadequate. The office of the Royal Engineers complained that "For Want of Men the Defence [of Fort George] does not advance so Rapidly."[67] In a series of questions proposed to the officers of artillery and engineers in the early summer of 1814, it was answered that the fort defences were wholly deficient.

Major General Phineas Riall, second in command to Drummond, wrote, *Fort George is in a very bad state of defence and can make little or no resistance against an army computed at between 5,000-6,000 men, with a due proportion of heavy artillery, and the only thing to prevent it being taken by assault is a bad row of picquets. If Fort George falls, the enemy will be abie to make a regular attack against*

Fort Niagara. Fort Mississauga will be much weakened if George and Niagara fall, as all supplies will be cut off.[68]

The American army along the Niagara, now under the command of Major General Jacob Brown, crossed the river above the falls on 3 July 1814 and captured the weakly defended Fort Erie. This success was followed by the Battle of Chippawa two days later, which forced the British to fall back to Fort George. Brown advanced to Queenston and awaited the appearance of the squadron of Commodore Chauncey which would force the British to retreat to Burlington Heights. But the overly cautious Chauncey did not leave Sackets Harbor, being afraid of what Sir James Yeo might attempt in his absence.

Desultory skirmishing occurred on 13 July about one-half mile from Fort George, in which the American Brigadier General John Swift was killed. On 15 July the Americans advanced in strength to establish their position and to conduct operations against the three forts of George, Mississauga and Niagara. Riall wrote to his superior, Drummond, who was still at Kingston, that,

Lt. Colonel Tucker has been instructed to hold out to the last extremity all the forts. The garrisons that have been left in them are fully sufficient for their defence. In Fort George are nearly 400 of the Royals, 200 of the 100th, and 60 Artillery. In Mississauga, 290 of the King's, the Coloured Corps, Military Artificers, and others, making with artillery 400 men. In Fort Niagara the 41st, and the whole of the Marine Artillery.[69]

The Americans made another demonstration against Fort George on 20 July and threw up some earthworks to commence cannon fire. But Major General Brown was becoming increasingly aware of his own growing weakness at Queenston and in front of Fort George. His field force was reduced by sickness and casualties to less than 3,000, and he was getting no co-operation from the navy. The continual skirmishing had not induced the British to leave their fortifications, and after consideration, Brown decided to withdraw to Queenston and then back to Chippawa. The three forts were never endangered for the duration of the war.

Sir Gordon Drummond, on the morning of 25 July, finally arrived at Fort George via the schooner *Netly* from York. Riall had moved toward Niagara Falls in pursuit of Brown. Drummond was eager for action and lost no time in getting involved.

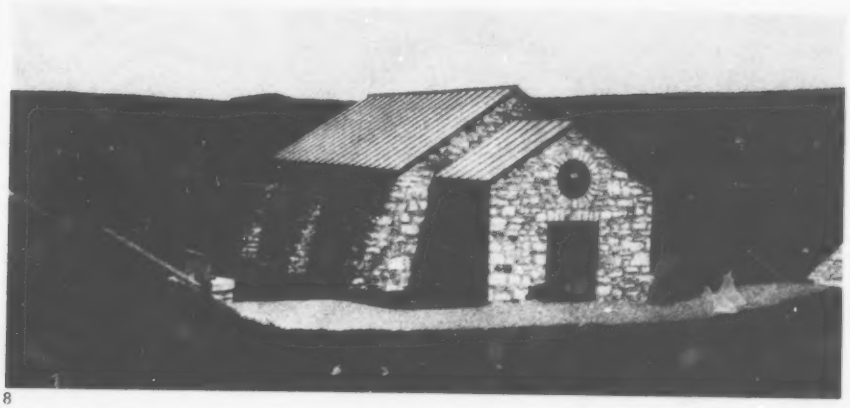
I ordered Lt. Col. Morrison with the 89th and detachments of the Royals and King's drawn from Forts George and Mississauga to proceed to Niagara Falls, in order to unite against the enemy. At the same time I ordered Lt. Col. Tucker to proceed on the right bank of the river with 300 of the 41st, and about 200 of the Royal Scots, and a body of Indian warriors. Having refreshed the troops at Queenston and having brought across Tucker's column I sent back the 41st to form a garrison at the forts. I then moved with the 89th and detachments of the Royals and King's and the Light Company of the 41st, in all 800 men, to join Riall's division at the Falls.[70]

What followed was the hard fought but indecisive Battle of Lundy's Lane. However, the retreat of the American army to Fort Erie the next day made it a tactical British success.

The rest of the 1814 campaign along the Niagara River was a stalemate. The Americans remained behind their strong fortifications at Fort Erie, and the British stubbornly maintained a siege, but without success. Throughout the summer and autumn Fort George was used as a depot, receiving provisions and stores from Montreal and Kingston for the British army in the field. During these months two large splinter-proof barracks and a new stone powder magazine were built at the fort. No further improvements were made. Thus, the campaign of 1814 in the Niagara sector ended. Both sides went into winter quarters after the fight at Cook's Mill in November, and the Treaty of Ghent, signed 24 December 1814, terminated the conflict on the basis of *status quo ante bellum*.

After the War of 1812, the problem of maintaining the costly frontier posts presented grave difficulties. The Royal Engineers argued that the defence of Fort George did not afford advantages and suggested that the less expense carried there the better. Although the Americans had strengthened and altered the structure of the fort and the British had built two new barracks for 300 men, the site was considered much inferior to that at Mississauga Point. If expense and work was to be done, "[we] should labour at the mouth of the Niagara River. A permanent fort instead of a Fieldwork is desirable...labour would add much

8 The British stone powder magazine, the only original building remaining at Fort George.
9 Interior view of the reconstructed Fort George, showing the officers' quarters on the left, and a soldiers' blockhouse barracks on the right.



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9

to the strength of the present point works."[71]

Major General Frederick Robinson, one of Wellington's officers during the Peninsular War, echoed the opinion of the Engineers.

Fort George is of no military value as a work of defence, although it serves the very useful purpose of confining a part of the Canadian regiment at night, and also contains a new magazine and ordnance stores. I beg leave therefore to recommend its being left untouched for the present as it will gradually crumble away and may be destroyed at any time in a few hours by small mines placed in the salient angles of the Bastions.[72]

The final decision was made by Gordon Drummond, the commander in chief, who agreed with this expert advice and ordered that "the expense of keeping up the old and useless Fort George, already tumbling into ruins, be discontinued."[73] British troops were still quartered in the log barracks of Fort George, but Fort Mississauga had replaced the historic and battered ruins of the older fort as the major military installation in the area.

In 1817 Captain R. Langslow of the East India Company's service travelled to Newark. Although he enjoyed the officer's mess of the 70th Regiment then stationed at Fort George he thought the barracks was infamous. "The post had been curtailed one-half," he stated, "and Fort Mississauga was a strong little star fort with a block tower in the centre."[74] Also in this year the president of the United

States, James Monroe, during a goodwill tour visited historic Fort George and was received with great civility by the officers.[75]

An unfortunate incident in the autumn of 1818 marred the harmony and peaceful co-existence which had always been displayed between the civilian population in the town and the military personnel of Fort George. A corporal of mild and quiet disposition and a private were excused to go to a juggling exhibition in the town. About 11 :00 P.M. the two soldiers went to an inn, noted for "riot and disorder," for a drink. The workmen, including the proprietor, attacked, punched and kicked the two men and forced them outside. The soldiers retreated to Fort George, but soon returned to the inn with reinforcements. A general melée followed, in which one civilian was killed as the result of receiving a blow on the head with a stick. The military co-operated fully with the civil authorities in an effort to discover the truth about a "matter so fatal an exception to the acknowledged uniform good understanding which has always subsisted betwixt the inhabitants of this town, the Province and the Regiment under my command."[76] This nasty incident apparently did not alienate the town from the garrison. Undoubtedly concerned with the continuation of economic profits, the merchants and other civilians of Newark wrote urgent memorials to the Duke of Richmond, newly appointed as governor in chief, pleading for reassurance that the town would not be abandoned by the British military, as a result of this rare misunderstanding.

A year after this affair, Adam Hodgson visited the area and "found at the village of Niagara about 400 British soldiers in a miserable fortress mouldering to decay with little appearance of discipline or respectability."[77] In 1826, in spite of petitions from the civilian population, military headquarters was removed from Fort George to York, but a small detachment was left to garrison the post.[78] By 1832, traveller E. T. Coke dismissed the fort by observing that "it had some low wooden decayed barracks."[79] The small remaining contingent of Royal Artillery was transferred to Mississauga in 1836, and in 1839 the Fort George barracks were converted into stables.[80] A final description of the old fort was presented by the touring American historian, Benson J. Lossing, who visited the abandoned mounds in the summer of 1860 and noted that, *The breastworks in all directions were quite perfect, and the entire form of the fort could be traced without difficulty. There were two or three houses within the works, and the parade and other portions were devoted to the cultivation of garden vegetables.*[81] In the years that followed, the Fort George plain was used as a race track, and a Canadian army summer camp was established later and survived until the mid-1960s.

In the spring of 1937 a project for the reconstruction of Fort George was begun by the Niagara Parks Commission under the direction of Ronald L. Way. The work was completed in the summer of 1940. The official opening of the restored fort was postponed, however, until the end of World War II. In June 1950, in an impressive ceremony complete with numerous dignitaries and Canadian and American military forces, Fort George was formally declared open to the public. The site was transferred to the National and Historic Parks Branch of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1969. Today the fort, rebuilt according to the original plans of the Royal Engineers, depicts Fort George as it existed during the British occupation of 1796-1813.

Appendix A

Return of Killed, Wounded and Missing of His Majesty's Troops in Action with the Enemy at Fort George, May the 27th, 1813.

General Staff – 1 wounded.

Royal Artillery – 1 rank and file killed; 1 rank and file wounded.

8th or King's Regiment – 1 lieutenant killed; 1 major, 3 lieutenants, 1 ensign wounded; 11 sergeants, 4 drummers, 181 rank and file missing.

41st Regiment – 3 rank and file wounded and missing.

49th Regiment – 2 rank and file killed; 2 rank and file wounded; 4 drummers, 28 rank and file wounded and missing.

Left in hospitals and wounded on former occasions – 16 rank and file, not included.

Glengarry Regiment – 1 captain, 1 ensign, 1 sergeant, 24 rank and file killed; 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 ensign, 3 sergeants, 20 rank and file wounded; 1 lieutenant, 2 sergeants, 23 rank and file wounded and missing.

Royal Newfoundland Regiment – 21 rank and file killed; 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 sergeant, 6 rank and file wounded; 5 rank and file wounded and missing.

Total – 1 captain, 1 lieutenant, 1 ensign, 1 sergeant, 48 rank and file killed; 1 general staff, 1 major, 2 captains, 5 lieutenants, 2 ensigns, 4 sergeants, 29 rank and file wounded; 1 lieutenant, 13 sergeants, 8 drummers, 240 rank and file wounded and missing.

Names of officers killed and wounded:

Killed – 8th or King's Regiment – Lieutenant James Drummie.

Glengarry Regiment – Captain Liddle, Ensign McLean.

Wounded – Colonel Myers, Acting Quartermaster-General, severely, not dangerously.

8th Regiment – Major Edward Cotton, Lieutenant J. W. Lloyd severely and prisoner; Lieutenants Mortimer, McMahon and Horace Noel; Ensign Richard Nicholson, severely and prisoner.

Glengarry Regiment – Captain Roxborough, Lieutenant Kerr, Ensign Kerr.

Royal Newfoundland Regiment – Captain Winter, Lieutenant Stewart.

Edward Baynes
Adjutant-General, North America[1]

Appendix B

Papers of Lt. Thomas Tayler of 41st,
Fort Major at Fort George in 1813

State of Troops in Cantonments,
head of Burlington Bay, 3d June, 1813

	M.	C.	L.	E.	Sergt.	Dr.	Fit for duty	Sick	Total
R. A.		2	2		1		56		56
Drivers		1	2		2		30		30
8th	2	2	7		14	5	357	3	360
41st		5	8	1	29	2	369	9	378
49th	2	8	9	6	38	14	554		554
R.N.I.		2	3		3	2	60		60
G.L.I.		1	1	2	3		58	8	66
Color Corp.		1			3		29	1	30
Dragoons		1		1	2		29		29
Militia	1	2	3	2	7	1	55		65
	5	25	35	12	102	24	1607	21	1628[1]

Appendix C

Questions proposed to the Officers of Artillery and Engineers

Question 1
What is the present state of Fort George as regards its Works and means of Defence?

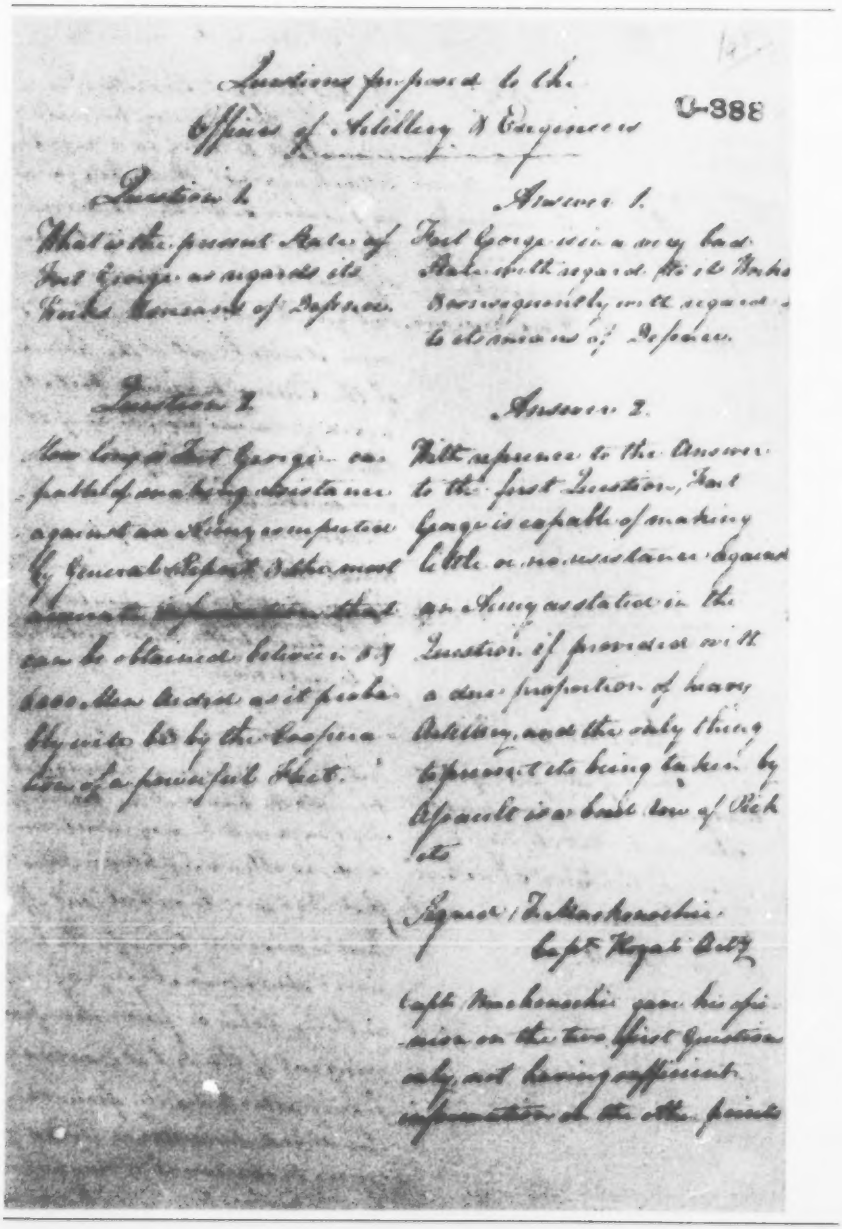
Answer 1
Fort George is in a very bad state with regard to its Works and consequently with regard to its means of Defence.

Question 2
How long is Fort George capable of making resistance against an Army computed by General Report and the most accurate information that can be obtained between 5 and 6,000 Men Aided as it probably will be by the Cooperation of a powerful Fleet?

Answer 2
With reference to the Answer to the first Question, Fort George is capable of making little or no resistance against an Army as stated in the Question if provided with a due proportion of heavy Artillery, and the only thing to prevent its being taken by Assault is a back bad row of Pickets, etc.

(Signed)
T. Mackowachsi
Capt. Royal Arty.

Capt. Mackowachsi gave his opinion on the two first questions only, not having sufficient information on the other points.



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C-388

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Signed / T. Mackowachsi
Capt. Royal Arty

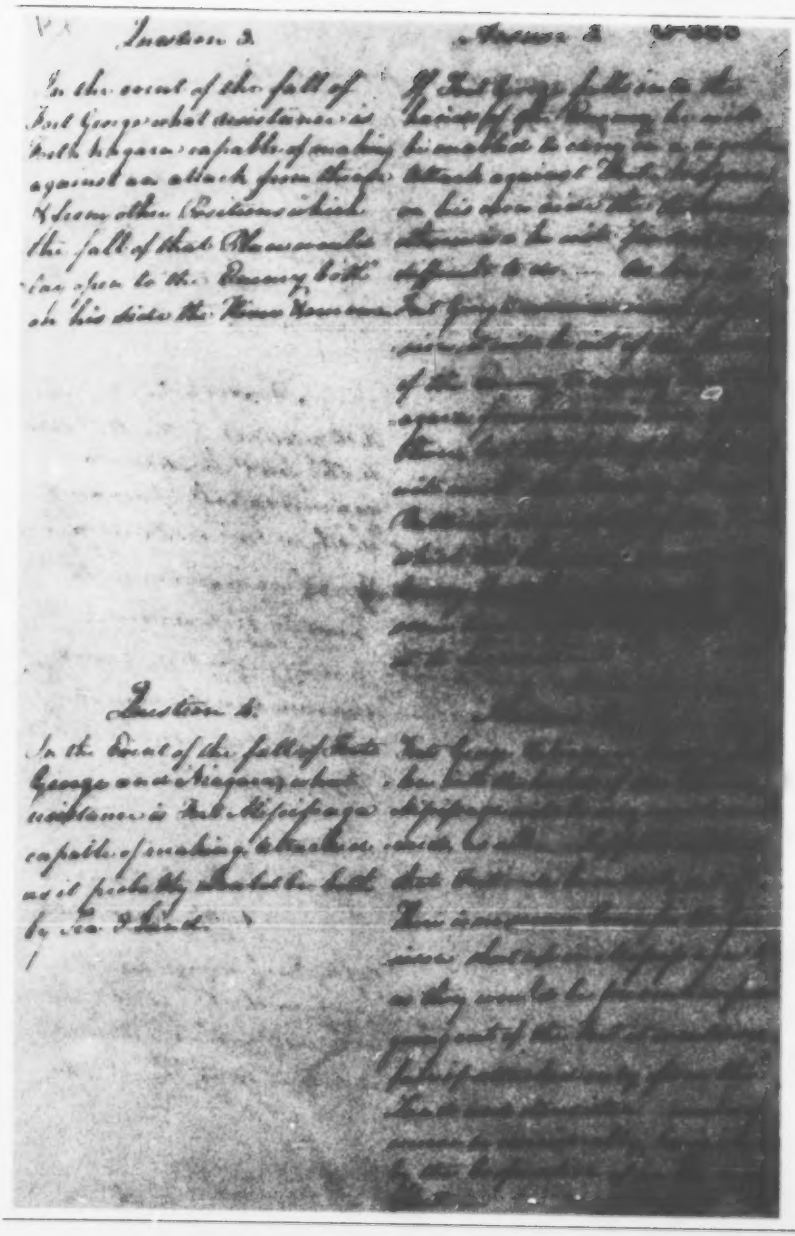
Capt. Mackowachsi gave his opinion on the two first Questions only, not having sufficient information on the other points

Question 3
In the event of the fall of Fort George what resistance is Fort Niagara capable of making against an attack from thence and from other Positions which the fall of that Place would lay open to the Enemy both on his side the River and our own?

Answer 3
If Fort George falls into the hands of the Enemy, he will be enabled to carry on a regular Attack against Fort Niagara on his own side the River which otherwise he will find it very difficult to do. As long as Fort George remains in our possession, it will be out of the power of the Enemy to annoy Fort Niagara from our own side of the River, but the fall of Fort George will enable the Enemy to erect Batteries on our side of the River which tho' they may considerably annoy Fort Niagara would be some time before they could oblige it to Surrender.

Question 4
In the Event of the Fall of Forts George and Niagara, what resistance is Fort Mississauga capable of making, attacked as it probably would be both by Sea and Land?

Answer 4
Forts George and Niagara having fallen into the hands of the Enemy, Mississauga will be very much weakened as all our Supplies without that Fort will be entirely cut-off. There is no secure Cover for the Garrison shut up in Mississauga and as they would be prevented from going out of the Fort it would soon fall if attacked only from the Land and its resistance would of course be considerably diminished by the Cooperation of an Enemy's fleet.



Question 5
In the event of the fall of Fort George, Niagara still being ours, what resistance is Fort Mississauga capable of, attacked as it would be by Sea and Land?

Answer 5
The fall of Fort George would not effect the fall of Fort Mississauga, except as it leads to the fall of Fort Niagara – which in the former instance has been shown to be the protection of our Supplies without Fort Mississauga.

Question 6
What is the state of Fort Mississauga, as regards its Works and Means of Defence?

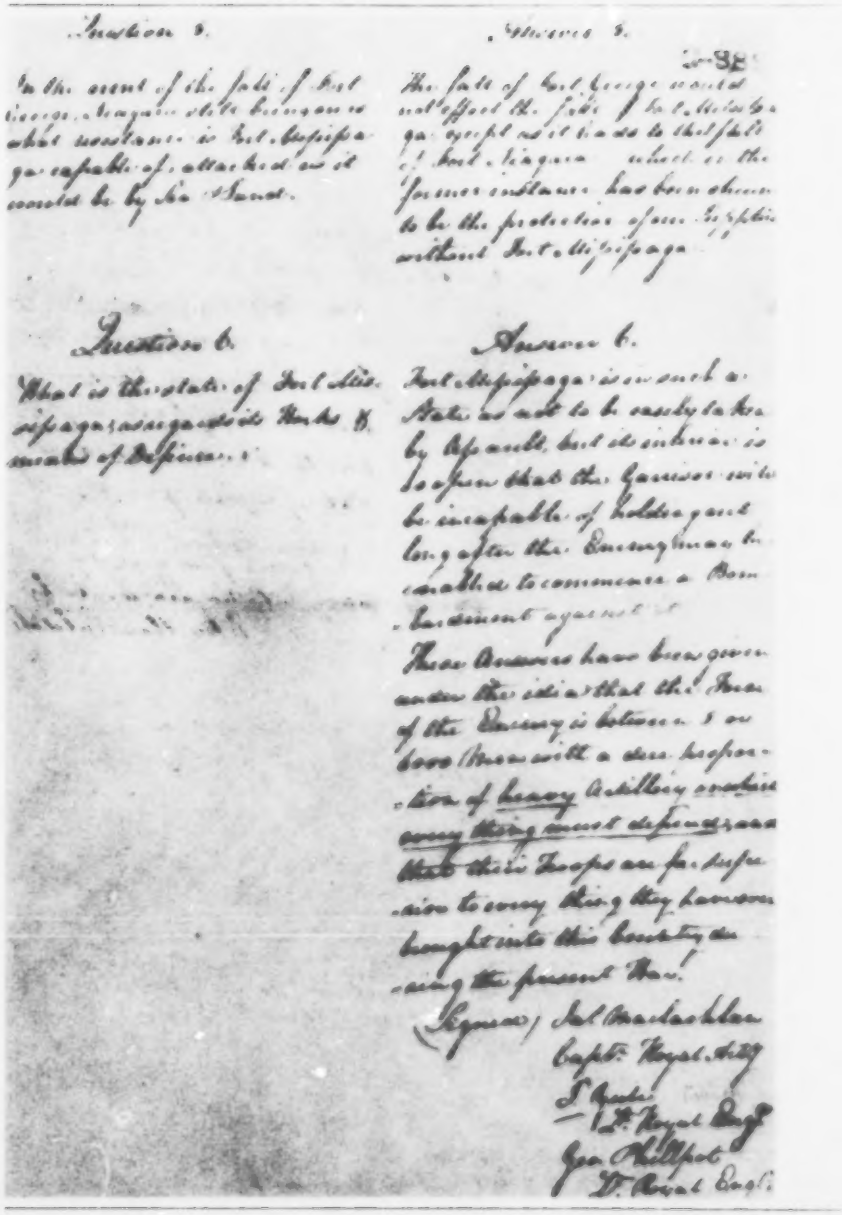
Answer 6
Fort Mississauga is in such a State as not to be easily taken by Assault, but its interior is so open that the Garrison will be incapable of holding out long after the Enemy may be enabled to commence a Bombardment against it.

These answers have been given under the idea that the Force of the Enemy is between 5 or 6,000 Men with a due proposition of *heavy* Artillery *on which everything must defend*, and that their Troops are far superior to everything they have ever brought into this Country during the present war.

(Signed)
Ia. Maclachlan
Capt. Royal Arty.

I. Yube
Lt. Royal Engrs.

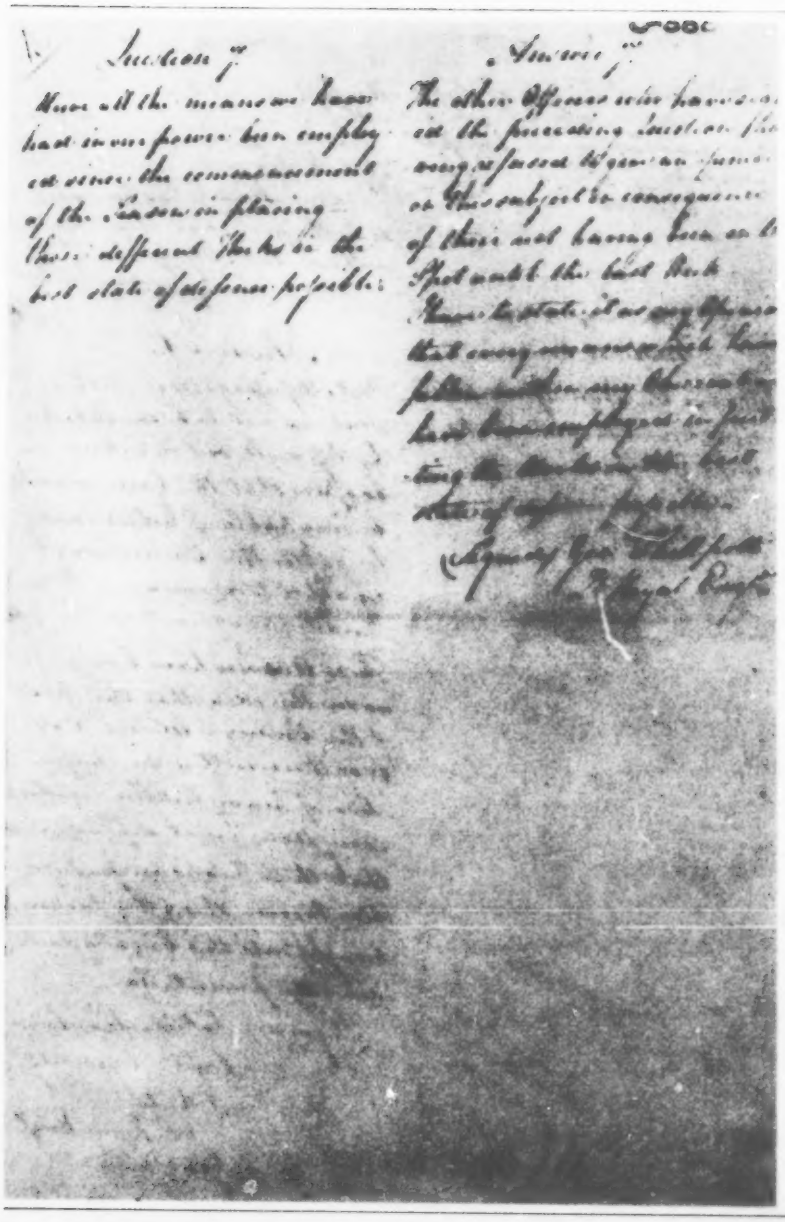
Geo. Phillpott
Lt. Royal Engrs.



Question 7
Have all the means we have had in our power been employed since the commencement of the Season in placing – those different Works in the best state of defence ?

Answer 7
The other officers who have signed the preceeding Question having refused to give an opinion on this subject in consequence of their not having been on the spot until the last Week. I have to state it as my Opinion that every means which have fallen within my Observation have been employed in putting the Works in the best state of defence possible.

(Signed)
Geo. Phillpott
Lt. Royal Engrs.[1]



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19 John Maude, "Diary of John Maude," *NHS*, Vol. 11 (1903), pp. 36-7, dated at West Niagara, late Newark, 27 August 1800.
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Appendix B

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Appendix C

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The Battle of Châteauguay

by Victor J. H. Suthren

Abstract

On 26 October 1813, on the banks of the Châteauguay River some 30 miles south of Montreal, an engagement was fought between the lead elements of an invading American army and a smaller Canadian force under British command. The result of this engagement was the withdrawal of the American army from Canada and the subsequent retirement of another American army descending the St. Lawrence. This ended the most serious invasion threat of the War of 1812 that Canada would be called upon to face, and demonstrated the ability of Canadians to effectively participate in the defence of their country.

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Introduction

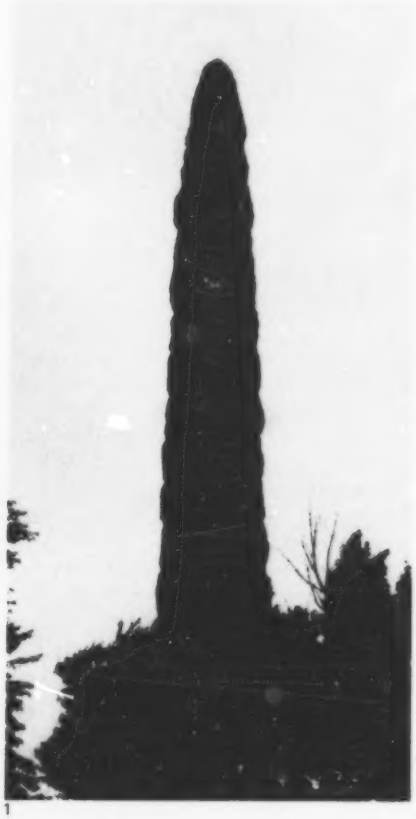
On Tuesday, 26 October 1813, between 10:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M., a force of some 1,000 Canadian regulars and militia under British command occupied defensive positions near and in the present village of Allans Corners, Quebec. They succeeded in repulsing an attack by an American army of over 4,000 men, thus halting the American force's descent of the Châteauguay River to the St. Lawrence, and thwarting a planned junction with another army descending the St. Lawrence toward Montreal. The engagement has come to be known as the Battle of Châteauguay.

On the face of it, the history of the Battle of Châteauguay immediately brings into question its validity as a battle. The engagement was a product of the Napoleonic era; Napoleon's success in dominating continental Europe led Britain to undertake her policies of maritime blockade and impressment which are cited as irritants important enough to help lead the United States to the declaration of war. But in the scales of mortal combat of its age, and indeed of other North American conflict to come, the fight at Châteauguay appears as little more than a skirmish; there are no lists of heavy casualties, no prodigious sweeps of infantry or cavalry across great battlefields. It is in the meaning of the fight, its nature and consequences, that Châteauguay earns its right to recognition. For a nation continually vigilant and sensitive to its political independence as well as the historical background of that concept, it stands as a genuine example of co-operation, although small in scale, between the principal founding cultural groups of Canada, in repelling a distinct threat to that independence.

One may quite rightly quote the immense casualty figures of the European struggle against Napoleon to diminish the physical scope of Châteauguay; but one cannot deny the reality that a large and powerful United States military force, sizeable enough to sweep before it all opposition which might have stood between it and its goal of Montreal, was attempting to sever the vital artery of the St. Lawrence and to capture the core of British North America; and that it was induced, or forced, to abandon this aim through the efforts of the Canadians at Châteauguay.

Had Major General Wade Hampton swept aside the defences at Châteauguay and marched on to Montreal, or successfully joined with General Wilkinson's army, it is unlikely that the Canadian territories west of Montreal could have remained long out of American control. The loss of this territory would have effectively confined British influence in the lower basin of the St. Lawrence, and the future growth of the North American hinterland would have progressed largely under American auspices. The Rupert's Land holdings of the Hudson's Bay Company notwithstanding, it is unlikely that the British government would have received much return for its North American colonial investment if denied access to the interior, and the anti-colonial approach of the first half of the 19th century would possibly have accelerated to a degree favourable to American continental interests. In short, the loss of the St. Lawrence would have meant the loss of future national identity for Canada.

1 The Châteauguay battle monument, Allans Corners, Quebec.



1

American military policy in prosecuting the land war against Canada never really questioned the saliency of this one strategic requirement : sever the St. Lawrence artery. American problems revolved more around recognizing this aim and coordinating efforts toward achieving it than questioning it, and this remained true for the duration of the War of 1812. British and Canadian interests lay in doing the utmost possible with minimal resources to either repulse or inhibit American attempts to carry out their aim. The Battle of Châteauguay is a successful result of this policy in action.

Châteauguay also offers an example of the Canadian sense of uniqueness as a nation, and of the capacity of its people from differing cultural backgrounds to unite successfully in a common task. The principally French-speaking participants in the battle stood shoulder to shoulder with English-speaking individuals of Scottish or Irish descent as well as Loyalists, and the officers were similarly of a broad ethnic origin. Châteauguay in no way diminished the very real tensions of post-Conquest Canada, as events some 24 years later were to reveal ; but it did show how a cool realization of a common danger could lead to a successful unity of purpose and action.

To French-speaking Canadians, the reality of what occurred at Châteauguay is important, for it is another stone in the edifice of a powerful cultural pride which, in turn, deserves its place in the historical pride of Canada as a whole. To detractors whose arguments are founded on misconceptions of history, prejudice, or outright political expediency, Châteauguay offers no countering half-truth ; simply the reality of pragmatic men fitting realistic thought to action with a successful result. The purpose of this study is to provide a narrative through which this may become self-evident.

Brief Sketch of Events to October 1813

With the declaration of war on 19 June 1812, President Madison wished to undertake a direct attack on a specific Canadian weak point. Where the initial attack was to be made proved difficult to agree upon, however, and a vague offensive plan developed in its place.

In the eyes of Isaac Brock commanding in Upper Canada, a war of offensive action seemed most appropriate; on the other hand, Sir George Prevost, governor in chief at Quebec, was more inclined to husband resources and rely on his fortified position and support from the Royal Navy.

In July of 1812, American forces under General Hull crossed at Detroit to take the small settlement of Sandwich in Ontario. In the same month, the western American post of Michilimackinac was taken at little cost by a mixed group of British regulars, Indians and employees of the North West Company. In August, General Hull retired to Detroit, issuing an appeal to the governors of Ohio and Kentucky for militia aid. He received too little support, however, to induce him to resist the surrender demands of Major General Brock, who took Detroit and Hull's force with hardly a shot fired.

Arrival at Quebec of the news of the repeal of the Orders in Council, which had been one of the official causes of the American declaration of war, led Prevost to dispatch a messenger to General Dearborn in New York state, successfully arranging a brief cessation of hostilities; meanwhile, on the Niagara frontier, Major General Roger Sheaffe and Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer of the United States had concluded their own local truce, which provided for a halt in defence build-up. This hiatus lasted only until September, however, when Washington ordered a return to hostilities, and mutual raiding began almost immediately across the St. Lawrence.

In October 1812, United States regular and militia forces began to concentrate along the Niagara frontier, albeit hampered by internal disorganization and rivalries. American lake vessels under Commodore Chauncey undertook a blockade of the British lake port of Kingston. Finally, on 13 October, American troops crossed the Niagara River and assailed British positions on Queenston Heights. Major General Sir Isaac Brock was killed in an attempted counter attack against the American position. Weakened by the refusal of the state militia forces to cross the river, the American forces at Queenston surrendered under pressure from a circuitous attack led by Sheaffe, who had succeeded Brock in command. An armistice along the Niagara was arranged almost immediately.

An event of some importance took place on 23 October, when an American attack on the Iroquois reservation at Saint-Régis swayed most Indian support to the British, if it had not already been in that quarter.

In November came the first organized American move against Montreal. General Dearborn assembled 3,000 regulars and 3,000 militia at Plattsburg and moved north. The militia refused to enter Canada, and Dearborn's reduced force pushed as far as Lacolle, where a mixed force of Canadian troops and Indians repulsed a probe and induced Dearborn to retire into winter quarters at Plattsburg. This incident, which occurred on 20 November, set a precedent for future defence of Lower Canada. Some eight days later, a brief and generally unsuccessful American thrust occurred across the Niagara River.

In January 1813, British forces under Procter managed tc defeat a mixed American force of regulars and militia under Winchester at Frenchtown on the Raisin River, during which a deplorable massacre occurred. Meanwhile American naval activity on Lakes Ontario and Erie was intensifying, instigated by the new American naval secretary, William Jones.

On 7 February, a party of American riflemen under Forsyth raided the town of Brockville; it was partly in retaliation for this raid that on 22 February a successful attack under the leadership of Lieutenant Colonel George Macdonell was mounted across the frozen river against American installations at Ogdensburg. In the same month, John Armstrong became the United States secretary of war, and by March had agreed to the Chauncey-Dearborn plan to attack York (Toronto) and then Fort George and Kingston.

The month of April saw this plan become reality. Chauncey's ships and their cargo of American regulars arrived at York on 27 April and carried out a successful attack. Too worn out by illness and exertion, however, the force returned to Sackets Harbor without assaulting Fort George.

Preliminary American Moves

On 5 May, Procter invested the American forces of Major General Harrison in Fort Meigs, Ohio, retiring after inflicting substantial losses. American preparations continued for the attack on Fort George, and on 25 May the assault was launched, forcing the British units present to withdraw westward toward Burlington. Three days later, Sir James Yeo's ships carried out a landing attack on Sackets Harbor. This latter engagement might have had greater consequences had it been successfully prosecuted.

In June, British fortunes improved somewhat, and on 3 June a small naval victory was won on Lake Champlain. On 5 June, the night attack at Stoney Creek by British troops under Lieutenant Colonel Harvey surprised the American force marching toward Burlington and caused them to retire toward Fort George, harrassed by shore bombardment from Sir James Yeo's vessels. Establishing a defensive position at Fort George, the American military suffered another setback with the defeat at Beaver Dams on 24 June, the incident which involved Laura Secord.

Throughout July, Secretary of War Armstrong prepared his campaign plans for the St. Lawrence assault and appointed James Wilkinson to the northern command. On 30 July, British presence on Lake Champlain was restated in a raid on Plattsburg and Swanton, Vermont, under the direction of Commander Everard, R.N.

On 2 August, Procter's British force mounted an unsuccessful attack against Fort Stephenson on the Sandusky River, Ohio. By 20 August, General Wilkinson arrived at Sackets Harbor and determined to descend the St. Lawrence in conjunction with Major General Wade Hampton, who would advance northward with an army along the Lake Champlain valley.

British fortunes took a severe setback in September, when on the ninth, Barclay's British Lake Erie squadron was defeated by O. H. Perry's American squadron, reducing support for the hard-pressed Procter who was retiring eastward. Perry's ships ferried Harrison's American forces into Canada in pursuit of Procter, and on 5 October the British were ignominiously defeated on the Thames River, losing an important Indian ally, Tecumseh.

The defence picture in Canada looked somewhat bleak when on 16 October Hampton received clearance to move northward toward the meeting at Châteauguay, and when, on the following day, Wilkinson departed Sackets Harbor for his descent of the river.

American campaigns of the first year of the war left little but a sense of failure in American minds. The wise who realized the necessity of naval and river superiority had not entirely overcome the illusory idea that a "mere matter of marching" would put Canada in American hands. The unwieldy four-pronged general assault of 1812 ended in disaster at Detroit, defeat at Queenston, and varying degrees of disappointment along the St. Lawrence and Richelieu. The end of the year saw no American forces in command of Canadian soil.[1]

It is unlikely that strategists on either side missed coming rapidly to the obvious conclusions about control of the water transport routes; clamour in the United States revolved around obtaining more effective leadership. The somewhat ineffective secretary of war, William Eustis, resigned on 3 December 1812, and was temporarily replaced by Secretary of State James Monroe. The man eventually chosen for the job, the energetic John Armstrong of New York, took office in February 1813, and by the tenth of that month was already ordering to Sackets Harbor, sufficient troops for a joint attack with Niagara forces on Kingston, York, or Fort George-Fort Erie, with priorities in that order.[2]

Armstrong also began to rearrange his field staff. Wade Hampton, who had been confirmed as major general in March 1813 after returning to military life five years previously, was given command of the Norfolk defences. A somewhat abler officer, George Izard, received the responsibility for the defences of New York. Both men figured in Armstrong's plan for the fall campaign, though none more so than a third officer, the New

Orleans commander, Major General James Wilkinson, who received orders transferring him to Sackets Harbor on Lake Ontario in March 1813.[3]

Armstrong appears to have had a clearer picture of the necessity of moving against the St. Lawrence than had Eustis; accordingly, on 23 July 1813, he formally presented President Madison with a plan for the assembly of a striking force under Wilkinson at Sackets Harbor, preparatory to an assault on Kingston. This attempt was to be accompanied by a secondary attack via the Champlain valley under Major General Hampton. Montreal was selected as an alternative to Kingston as target for a joint attack, with the commanding general to be at liberty to select which alternative he preferred, "to be determined by circumstances."[4]

Wilkinson's comments on the Montreal attack and fears as to the strength of the Kingston garrison led Armstrong to suggest that, while Kingston be considered the primary target, it could certainly be attacked "indirectly" in line with the suggested joint assault with Hampton on Montreal. In addition, Armstrong informed Wilkinson that he had ordered Hampton to proceed to Burlington, Vermont, there to organize his army. Hampton was to be under Wilkinson's orders and work with him in prosecution of the plan of the campaign "which has been given to you." Arriving at Sackets Harbor on 20 August, Wilkinson began to assemble a 7,000-strong force, while Hampton, annoyed at subordination to Wilkinson and vowing to resign at the close of the campaign, proceeded to amass a slightly smaller force at Burlington.[5]

Hampton's army has been set at 5,520 infantry, 180 cavalry, and an artillery battery of "eight 6 pounders, one 12, and one howitzer, tolerably appointed, and found." Units making up this force are listed as comprising the 4th United States Infantry Regiment; detachments of the 5th, 10th, 29th, 31st, 33rd and 34th United States Infantry Regiments; a squadron of the 2nd United States Light Dragoons; a detachment of the United States Light Artillery Regiment, and numbers of an unidentified New York militia unit. Indeed, what militia units were involved remains a mystery, with the possible exception of a company of 109 men under Captain Nathaniel Benson of Little Falls, New York, mentioned as present at Châteauguay.[6]

At the beginning of September, Wilkinson travelled to Niagara to draw troops for his own force. Plans to begin the campaign on 25 September were delayed, however, when Wilkinson became ill. Nevertheless, Armstrong continued preparations until Wilkinson could return. Hampton, soothed somewhat by Armstrong's diplomacy, received and agreed to orders on 20 September to be ready to move on Canada from Plattsburg, New York.[7]

Brought up on the frontier in Virginia and South Carolina, Wade Hampton served meritoriously in the American Revolution under General Thomas Sumter. His parents and much of his family had been murdered in their home by Cherokees, a calamity Hampton escaped by chance. In the period between the wars, Hampton undertook several public responsibilities, among them membership in the Constitutional Convention, a seat in the Virginia legislature, several terms as a United States congressman and service as a presidential elector in 1801. Throughout these years, Hampton maintained his military connections. In 1808, he received a colonelcy and was made brigadier general in 1809, serving as commander of the Norfolk defenses until commissioned as major general and appointed to the northern campaign in 1813. His civilian life had been occupied with acquiring large and lucrative plantation holdings as well as achieving political status.[8]

A succinct description of Hampton pictures him as a man whose *many political and military responsibilities had not kept him from advancing his private interests. He had the qualities which made for success in the South Carolina up-country: energy, foresight, and the frontiersman's attitude toward land; that is, the will to possess without an over scrupulous regard for the means of acquiring possession.*[9]

George Izard, his subordinate at Châteauguay, was a South Carolinian of "gentle" birth. His father had been

a close friend of George Washington. Izard received a broad education and made the European tour. Between 1794 and 1803, he served as an officer of artillery, resigning to undertake military studies in England and France. In 1812 he received a colonelcy in the 2nd United States Artillery, and in 1813 was appointed brigadier general. After his competent performance at Châteauguay, Izard was appointed major general and some years later, in 1825, became the governor of Arkansas Territory. He died in that office on 22 November 1828. Of him has been written,

He was a man of fine physique and commanding presence. In his manners he evinced a consciousness of his commanding position, but was affable and agreeable in his intercourse with the humblest citizen....He was eccentric in some respects, and viewed life from a matter-of-fact standpoint.[10]

James Wilkinson appears to have been an individual who owed the success of his career more to a political nimbleness than an unquenchable integrity. The animosity between him and Hampton may have sprung from the taint of intrigue which hung about Wilkinson, or from a simple jealous rivalry largely over political influence. The roots of this ill-feeling are obscure. *General Hampton's refusal to cooperate with his rival General Wilkinson, as some histories have it, was in order to foil what he thought was some kind of treachery or conspiracy. The idea seems to be that Wilkinson ordered him to make certain moves so that the entire United States force could be capitulated. This theory seems to make sense since...General Wilkinson was involved in one conspiracy after another, starting with the Conway Cabal of 1777 which sought to undercut General Washington and have him removed from command. It is recorded that he treasonably attempted to detach Kentucky from the Union and ally it with Spain. He was implicated in the Burr conspiracy and courtmartialled, but acquitted.*[11]

The true nature of the Hampton-Wilkinson animosity invites further research; for the purposes of the campaign of 1813, it was a factor which influenced the decision Wade Hampton would have to make, a decision of crucial importance to Canada and the defenders along the course of the Châteauguay River.

The other important field officer of the American force present at Châteauguay was Colonel Robert Purdy, of the 4th United States Infantry Regiment. Purdy was a native of Pennsylvania and entered the army as an ensign of infantry in the augmentation of the U.S. army which occurred in March, 1792. With the organization of the Legion of the United States under Major General Anthony Wayne, Ensign Purdy was assigned to the 4th Sublegion in September of 1792. On 19 April 1793 he was promoted to lieutenant. Although not mentioned in accounts of the Battle of Fallen Timbers, 20 August 1794, Purdy may have been in garrison in one of the forts along the communications line to the rear. During the army reorganization of 1 November 1796 Purdy remained with the 4th Sublegion, which became the 4th United States Infantry. He became a captain on 3 March 1799. Although retained when the army was reduced in 1802, Purdy left the army for civilian life, returning again in 1809 to take the position of lieutenant colonel of the 7th Infantry. On 26 August 1812 Purdy was promoted to the colonelcy of the 4th Infantry, and joined that regiment for the 1813 campaign. In May 1815, he was not selected for retention and received an honourable discharge from the army.[12]

The slow-moving preparations at Sackets Harbor and the head of the St. Lawrence were galvanised by inaccurate but startling reports that Yeo's British lake squadron was soon to put into Kingston with a large force of troops brought from Burlington Bay. Wilkinson began to move his advance troops to Grenadier Island at the end of September, and Hampton readied his force for action. The news of Yeo's reinforcement consolidated the American plan. Overriding a suggestion by Wilkinson that Hampton's army be brought up to join in a mass assault on Kingston, Armstrong pressed Wilkinson, by written order, into commencing an immediate descent upon Montreal.[13]

Hampton was informed by letter on 16 October of Wilkinson's impending march, and received clear orders to "approach the mouth of the Châteauguay, or other point which shall better favour our junction, and hold the enemy in check."[14] With this order, Hampton received word to put his army in motion toward that extraordinary engagement of which Major (later Major General) John E. Wool, U.S. 29th Infantry Regiment, would later say, "No officer who had any regard for his reputation would voluntarily acknowledge himself as having been engaged in it."[15]

Canadian Defensive Preparations

2 Lieutenant Colonel Charles M. de Salaberry. A contemporary portrait showing de Salaberry in the uniform of the Canadian Voltigeurs. (*Château de Ramezay*.)

2

If military leaders in the United States found it difficult to define their tactical goals, no such problem was present in the mind of Sir George Prevost, governor of the Canadas, as war approached. Several key observations were made by him from the outset. *Montreal is the principal commercial city in the Canadas, and in the event of War, would become the first object of Attack: – It is situated on an extensive Island, and does not possess any means of defence: – Its security depends upon our being able to maintain an impenetrable line on the South Shore, extending from La Prairie to Chambly, with a sufficient Flotilla to command the Rivers St. Lawrence and the Richelieu.*[1]

Prevost, however, had few British regulars to hold this "impenetrable line"; the militia available in the Montreal area, some 12,000 men, and indeed in all Lower Canada (60,000) did not inspire Prevost's military confidence.[2]

To the immediate south of the city, two points on the vital Richelieu artery presented very typical problems of undermanning and easy access to an invading force. Saint-Jean commanded the river but could "be turned by following the new Roads leading from the United States to Montreal," and its small garrison, composed of one company each from the 10th Foot Royal Veterans and the 49th Foot, was insufficient to hold the town. Its back up, Fort Chambly, which served as a storage depot and assembly point for the militia, was defended by a small detachment of Royal Artillery and some 300 of the newly formed Canadian regular unit, the Canadian Vol-

tigeurs. The latter had taken up their post at Chambly shortly before Prevost's observations were made.[3]

Critics of Prevost suggest that his appreciation of his position was, under the circumstances, unnecessarily defensive. On the surface, his basic premise seems to have been little changed from that of previous successful defenders of the St. Lawrence artery, particularly in 1775-76. "I have considered the preservation of Quebec as the first object, and to which all others must be subordinate."[4] It was in the degree to which Prevost was prepared to subordinate "all others" that criticism would centre; for the moment, however, consideration of his meagre numerical resources with the potential manpower of the United States made his position comprehensible.

In July, 1812, the total number of organized and disciplined rank and file available in Lower Canada, were as follows:[5]

Royal Artillery	347
10th Foot Royal Veterans	309
1st Battn 8th Foot	946
41st Foot	2
49th Foot	664
100th Foot	479
103rd Foot	700
Royal Newfoundland Fencibles	47
Canadian Fencibles	666
Glengarry Light Infantry Fencibles	435
Canadian Voltigeurs	272
Total	4,867

Of these, distribution of the rank and file along Prevost's "impenetrable line" earlier that month presented a picture of painfully few numbers totalling 1,481 over a large area.[6]

Montreal	
Royal Engineers	29
10th Foot	2
41st Foot	7
49th Foot	485
100th Foot	2
Canadian Fencibles	3

Trois Rivières	
Canadian Fencibles	1
Glengarry Fencibles	396

Chambly	
Royal Artillery	13
Canadian Voltigeurs	243

William Henry (Sorel)	
Royal Artillery	2
49th Foot	4
100th Foot	145

Ile-aux-Noix	
10th Foot	24
49th Foot	7

Saint-Jean	
10th Foot	16
49th Foot	32

Cascades	
10th Foot	5

Odelltown	
49th Foot	15

Coteau-du-Lac	
10th Foot	4

With such shallow resources, reliance on the "mere posse" of the militia for support was a matter of necessity, and orders for the mobilization of certain portions of the armed citizenry were promulgated in the same month.[7]

Prevost's appreciation of the militia was probably correct at that point; their potential for being a reliable force, even if only in appearance, would appear in the future, to the great comfort of the authorities who shared William Dunlop's observation.

We came up with several regiments of militia on their line of march. They had all a serviceable effective appearance – had been pretty well drilled, and their arms being direct from the tower, were in perfectly good order, nor had they the mobbish appearance that such a levy in any other country would have had. Their capots and trowsers of home-spun stuff, and their blue tuques (*night caps*) *were all of the same cut and color, which gave them an air of uniformity that added much to their military look, for I have always remarked that a body of men's appearance in battalion, depends much less on the fashion of their individual dress and appointments, than on the whole being in strict uniformity.*

They marched merrily along to the music of their voyageur songs, and as they perceived our uniform as we came up, they set up the Indian Warwhoop, followed by a shout of Vive le Roi *along the whole line. Such a body of men in such a temper, and with so perfect a use of their arms as all of them possessed, if posted on such ground as would preclude the possibility of regular troops out-manoeuvering them, (and such positions are*

3 Lieutenant Colonel Charles M. de Salaberry, 1752-1829, by A. S. Scott. An inaccurate but interesting portrayal, done apparently as a patriotic work during World War II. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

3

not hard to find in Canada), must have been rather a formidable body to have attacked.[8]

The decisions of the American strategists to undertake attack in the west in a general four-pronged thrust required that whatever Canadian regular units were available be moved to Kingston and points west as conditions permitted. Sparsely populated Upper Canada needed their services more than the lower province which had its substantial militia reserve. This dispersal westward in the first year of the war brought into focus units which would figure in the defence at Châteauguay. The occupation of the British regulars available to Prevost in other theatres of the war would see Hampton face what would be an essentially Canadian force.

Distribution of Troops in Canada. Quebec, December 21st 1812
(signed) E. Baynes

Voltigeurs at St. Phillippe	267
Canadian Fencibles at Quebec	26
Trois Rivières	2
William Henry	456
Chambly	79
Halfway House	79
Ile-aux-Noix	12
Montreal	5
1st Battalion Embodied Militia at L'Acadie	120
Saint-Jean	261
Ile-aux-Noix	120
2nd Battalion Embodied Militia at La Prairie	430
Ile-aux-Noix	20
3rd Battalion Embodied Militia at Beloeil	314
Ile-aux-Noix	68
4th Battalion Embodied Militia at Saint-Denis	336
Saint-Hyacinthe	71
103rd Foot at Chambly	165[9]

It is revealing to examine in some detail the process of general orders for troop movements from this time to the days of battle in October 1813, for from it arises a clear picture of a continual flow of troops westward from Montreal, passing through those units which continued to form the brick and mortar of Prevost's south shore line. Links of this line were borrowed from time to time to strengthen the westward defences, but Prevost's overriding concern for his defensive position as outlined to Liverpool in 1812 remained largely unaltered.

With the arrival of September and the substantial threat posed by the build-up of American troops under Wilkinson and Hampton at Sackets Harbor and Burlington, the British command made the major adjustment on the Montreal frontier which established in large part the defensive alignment that faced Wade Hampton the following month. Prevost's "impenetrable line" was divided into reserve and advanced divisions, the former under Major General Sir Roger Sheaffe, the latter under Major General Stovin. The plan commenced with the detailing of the reserve, of which the right was

to occupy La Prairie on the St. Lawrence, extending through St. Pierre, St. Philippe, L'Acadie to St. John's on the Richelieu, and to consist of a Car Brigade, a squadron of the 19th Light Dragoons, the Company of Guides, the Flank Battalion of the Line-detachment of 103rd Regt. four companies 3rd Battalion Sedentary Militia of Longueuil, Boucherville and Vercheres.

The post of St. John and Isle Aux Noix is to be garrisoned by the Battalion Companies of the 13th Regt. one company 10th Royal Veteran Battalion and the 4th Battalion E. Militia. –

The Advance is placed under the command of Major General Stovin – the Right to occupy Châteauguay extending through the settlements of Sherrington and Hammingford to the mouth of the Lacolle on the Right to consist of the following corps: –

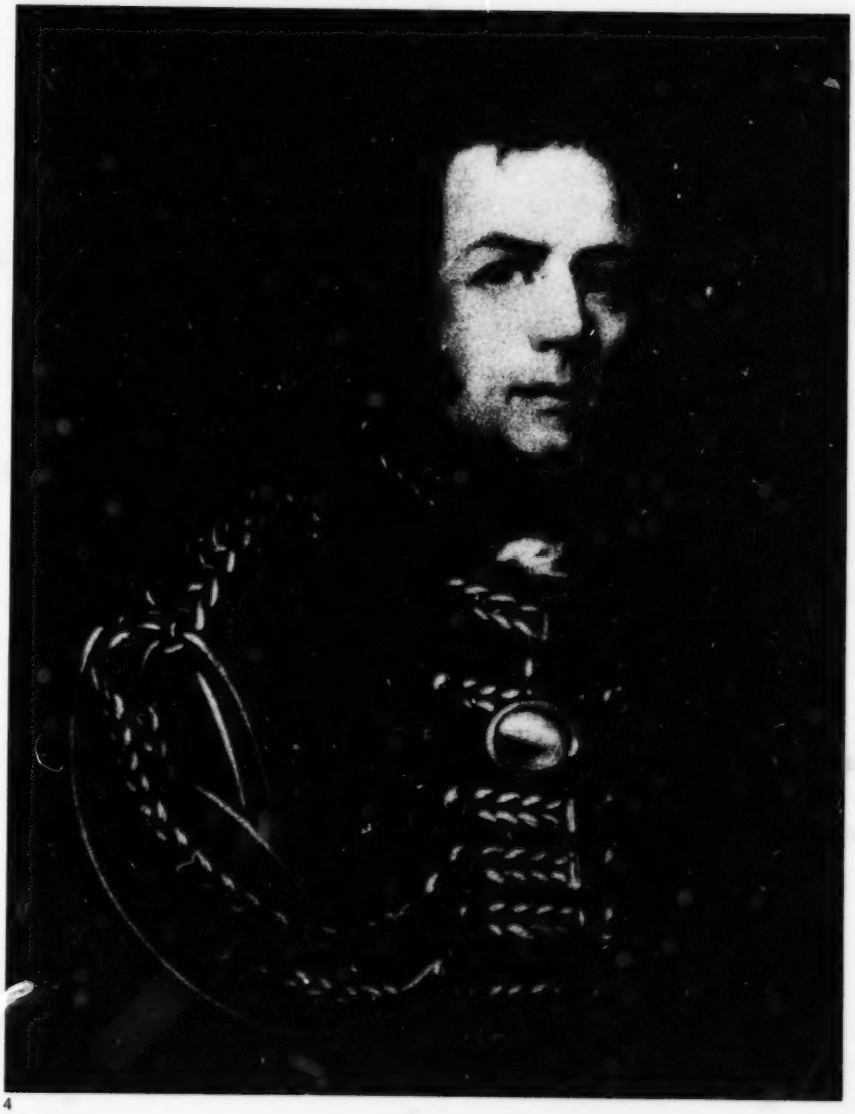
Two Three Pounders of Artillery
One Troop of 19th Lt. Drago.
Captain Watson's Troop
Canadian Light Infantry
Canadian Voltigeurs
Frontier Light Infantry
Canadian Battn. of Light Infantry
1st Battn. Embodied Militia
2nd Battn. Embodied Militia

The Chasseurs and Sedentary Militia of Beauharnois, Châteauguay, and the 1st and 4th Battalions of the Townships – the distributions of these corps will be detailed to Major General Stovin.[10]

As well, the city of Montreal was to undertake formation of a brigade under Colonel James McGill from the three battalions of town militia and the "Montreal Volunteer Companies."

Between 4 and 6 October the companies of the 103rd Foot were put in motion from their reserve position to march to Coteau-du-Lac via Sainte-Anne. The knowledge of Major General Hampton's presence at Chateauguay, New York, and Wilkinson's position on the St. Lawrence added impetus to this move and other hurried ones which followed. The general order for 8 October 1813 delineates the increasing pace of defensive preparations: all Montreal area troops were to cook two days' salt provisions to be carried with biscuit in their packs; two 24-pounders and a 19th Light Dragoons detachment were sent from La Prairie to Montreal; Major General Stovin was to march to Caughnawaga from La Prairie with "all the residue of the troops," leaving only a small guard; flank companies and four battalion

4 Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, by S. W. Reynolds. (*Public Archives of Canada*.)



companies of the 1st Battalion Embodied Militia were to march with two field pieces to Caughnawaga, leaving the battalion companies of the 13th Foot at L'Acadie. To Caughnawaga as well went a detachment of the Canadian Fencibles and four companies of the 3rd Battalion Embodied Militia. The Caughnawaga Indians as well as the 2nd Battalion (Beauharnois) Sedentary Militia were sent to the shores of the Beauharnois Channel to back up the 103rd Foot at Coteau-du-Lac; while a detachment of the 1st Battalion Royal Marines at Trois Rivières was ordered up to Montreal "in all possible haste." The militia was under orders to carry 40 rounds at all times as well as the cooked salt provisions.[11]

The tense anticipation throughout the lower province is evinced in the further orders for the tocsin to sound when necessary; a sweeping order went out for all north shore militia within 50 miles of Montreal to repair there with arms or earthworking tools. Meanwhile, south shore militias were ordered to assemble at Caughnawaga, while the militias of the Richelieu and Yamaska regions not under orders were called to L'Acadie and Saint-Jean.[12]

5 Colonel George Macdonell, C.B.
(*Public Archives of Canada.*)

The relative positions of the units directly involved in the fight at Châteauguay are not clear, nor does elucidation appear in a further general order dated 9 October at La Prairie, in which the stations indicated were probably those from which the members of de Salaberry's command marched later in the month. The Saint-Denis garrison of militiamen was ordered to L'Acadie; the 1st Battalion Embodied Militia under Colonel de Rouville was ordered to Chambly; Colonel de Lery's Boucherville Militia moved to Saint-Pierre, while two companies each of the 4th Battalion Select Embodied Militia and the 13th Regiment were ordered to "incline" toward Saint-Philippe and Saint-Pierre. Major General Stovin was to order the Voltigeurs to Saint-Pierre as well, while he proceeded to Saint-Regis; the 1st Battalion Select Embodied Militia was to occupy L'Acadie, while the Canadian Fencibles were to join the reserves at La Prairie.[13]

That a great deal of movement occurred in the Canadian defence formations in the period prior to the battle is apparent in the entry for the period in the diary of Charles Pinguet, lieutenant of Canadian Fencibles.
De la Halfway House, où nous étions dans mai, on nous a envoyés à Chambly; de Chambly nous avons été à Plattsburg, environ quinze lieues au-delà des lignes sur le lac Champlain;

5

de là, nous sommes revenus à Chambly ou nous avons joint le régiment ; là, quatre des nos compagnies nous ont laissés pour le Haut-Canada où elles sont a présent. De Chambly, nous avons été à Laprairie, de là à Saint-Philippe ; de St-Philippe notre compagnie a été envoyée à Douglas Settlement, près des lignes, ou nous ont joint deux compagnies des Murons ; nous avons été là trois jours et sommes revenus à Saint-Philippe ; le lendemain de notre arrivée, nous avons reçu ordre d'aller à Saint-Pierre.[14]

The presence of Hampton on the upper Châteauguay caused the principal headquarters of the defence to concentrate on Châteauguay county by the middle of October, with the advance positions along that river receiving reinforcement from local militia drafts. The question of authority was altered somewhat with the appointment on 17 October of Major General de Watteville to command the advance in place of Major General Stovin. De Watteville was to remain in command for the period of the battle. Directly beneath him, and responsible for the defences of the Châteauguay River and its watershed, was Lieutenant Colonel Charles M. de Salaberry of the Canadian Voltigeurs.[15]

Charles Michel d'Irumberry de Salaberry was the son of a Canadian *seigneur* who had served with the British forces and had been a member of the Legislative Council. Three other sons as well as Charles entered the army, supported in part by a family friendship with the Duke of Kent. Charles alone survived his early career, the other young officers dying in India and Spain. De Salaberry served in the West Indies, and was on garrison duty in Ireland. On returning to Canada shortly before the war as an aide-de-camp, he married a Canadian girl and was called on to form the Voltigeurs at the approach of hostilities with the United States. For his meritorious service during the war, de Salaberry received a C.B., and was appointed a member of the Legislative Council. He lived a successful and comfortable life surrounded by his family until he died quite suddenly on 26 February 1829 at the age of fifty-one.[16]

George Richard John Macdonell, who would command the reserves at the Battle of Châteauguay, was born in 1770 and began his military career with the Loyal British Fencibles in 1794. After attaining the rank of Captain in the 8th Foot (King's) Regiment, he undertook in 1811 to raise the Glengarry Light Infantry, and became its major in February 1812. Prior to Châteauguay he had distinguished himself in the capture of Ogdensburg, New York, leading the attack across the river ice. For his services at Châteauguay, Macdonell received the C.B. and the Châteauguay gold medal. He later became lieutenant colonel of the 79th Foot. He married a daughter of Lord Arundel of Wardour ; he died in 1870.[17]

To these two career officers, one Canadian, one British, of the British forces in Canada, would go the key responsibilities in the approaching battle which held such significance for the fate of Lower Canada.

Major General Hampton's first move was to transfer his force in a 10-day operation across Lake Champlain to Plattsburg, commencing in the first week of September. This undertaking was completed without molestation from the small British lake squadron at Ile-aux-Noix, whose officers were hesitant to engage the escorting naval force that consisted at that time of five gun sloops, two row galleys and a small steamboat. The operation was completed by 18 September, when Colonel Robert Purdy assumed command of the 4th U.S. Infantry at the stopover point of Cumberland Head, New York.[1]

This westward transfer across the lake led Sir George Prevost, who from Montreal had watched for a northward thrust from the Burlington base, to conclude that a joint Wilkinson-Hampton attack on Kingston was contemplated, and he accordingly moved there to prepare for it. On the Champlain frontier, however, Hampton prepared for his second move, and on 19 September put his army on the march for Chazy and Champlain, New York.[2]

Simultaneously, Sir Roger Sheaffe in Montreal determined that these movements indicated a probable invasion in the direction of Montreal ; accordingly, as Hampton got under way to the north, Sheaffe gave orders for the obstruction of all roads in the vicinity of Odelltown, as well as blockade of the cart road leading from there to the St. Lawrence basin at L'Acadie, and the destruction of the Lacolle River bridge. These orders were carried out quickly and ably by temporary levies of local militia under the overall supervision of Lieutenant Colonel Charles Fremont, formerly commander of the Saint-Vallier division of militia

and at this point a deputy quartermaster general of militia.[3]

In Purdy's account of the next few days:

The army got under weigh, preceded by the light corps, and flanked on the left by the navy, and arrived at Chesy at 12 o'clock at night, lay on their arms, embarked again soon after sunrise the next morning, proceeded down the lake as far as Champlain, and up Champlain river the distance of four miles, where we landed, and immediately marched to Odletown. The light corps who preceded the other troops some hours, surprised and defeated a guard at that place. We remained at Odletown until the middle of the next day, during which time a want of system in the management of the army was readily discovered by every military man, that led to apprehensions for the safety of the troops, should the enemy oppose with any considerable force. The army returned to Champlain on the 21st, the 22nd to Chesy, and the day following commenced the route to Châteauguay.[4]

The arrival at "Odletown" was not uncontested, however. Although the American advance troops dispersed the first picket and captured four men, they did not effectively close with harrassing units that lurked around the American camp. These units were a detachment of the Frontier Light Infantry, Indians, two successive reinforcements from two companies of the 4th Battalion, Select Embodied Militia, and two companies of Voltigeurs under de Salaberry.[5]

Hampton was forced to retreat from this position not because of the annoying though slight resistance his pickets faced, but rather a lack of water supplies. Local brooks, and possibly the Lacolle River as well as swampy areas, were dry and provided no fresh water for either troops or horses, so the horses were returned to Lake Champlain.[6]

Purdy's criticism of the "want of system in the management of the army" may have referred to the expediency to which Hampton resorted in facing this water problem, a council of war which recommended a retreat and selection of an alternate route north, while conveniently reducing the commanding general's onus of responsibility for this decision. The decision was to recommend use of the road flanking the Châteauguay River, which lay some 70 miles to the west but which they hoped was neither blockaded nor dry.[7]

The march west did not improve either the logistics of the army or its morale, as inadequacies in the commissariat preparations, ostensibly Hampton's responsibility, were not well handled.[8] Purdy's account, though succinct, allowed him yet another opportunity to criticise his commander. *The whole of this march, a distance of more than seventy miles, was very disagreeable; the officers were not permitted to take with them the necessaries, much less the conveniences of life, and were compelled to abandon clothing and other things essentially necessary to preserve the body in health. We forbore complaint, enduring every privation, presuming the commanding officer had sufficient reasons for his conduct, and concluding it was pro bono publico. The scene has passed, and time sufficient to have discovered those reasons, had they existed. None have been found: on the contrary, circumstances have demonstrated that it was a useless and unnecessary sacrifice of both public and private property. The army remained at Châteauguay 26 days, and on the 21st October commenced an excursion into the enemy's country.*[9]

Arriving at Châteauguay Four Corners on about 25 September, Hampton set about "training his troops, in cutting and improving a more direct road to Plattsburg, and in bringing forward his artillery and provisions for two months."[10] Meanwhile, he awaited further news and orders from Wilkinson or Armstrong.

If Sellar's description is accurate, the camp at Four Corners was far from conducive to regenerating Hampton's already fatigued, peevish army. *Tents were pitched on the clearings south and west of where the railway station of Chateauguay, N.Y., now [1913] stands...Hampton and his staff found shelter in the one tavern. His haughty air repulsed the simple backwoodsmen, who, for the first time, saw a Southern planter and the general of no mean army. Of the thousand slaves he was reputed to have in the Carolinas a number waited on him as servants. Little blockhouses were put together as shelter for the*

outposts, of which there was need, for Indians lurked in the woods and cut off stragglers. [A Canadian attack of 1 October] *had a bad effect on the morale of the army, the soldiers contracting an absurd dread of a foe, who, though despicable in numbers, was unseen and unsleeping. The men shrank from sentry duty and not a night passed without dropping shots from the woods. To this natural fear was added discomfort. No new clothing was issued, and the cotton uniforms for summer wear, now threadbare and ragged, were poor protection against the white frosts and rains of the fall. Food had to be hauled from Plattsburg, keeping 400 wagons, drawn by 1,000 oxen, constantly on the road, so that the supply was subject to the weather and often short.*[11]

Following the contact at Odelltown, de Salaberry, as the officer responsible for both the Châteauguay and Lacolle pickets, retired along the L'Acadie road but kept informed, through scouts, of Hampton's movement. Learning that Hampton had established his camp at Four Corners, de Salaberry proceeded to carry out a reconnaisance and attack on this camp. Marching with two companies of Voltigeurs, the Light Company of the Canadian Fencibles (Ferguson's) and about 100 Indians, de Salaberry arrived at the edge of the American camp late in the afternoon of 1 October. Their presence revealed by one of the Indians' untimely firing of a musket, de Salaberry led one company of Voltigeurs and the Indians in a rush on the outer edge of the sprawling American camp. The Americans responded quickly, however, and, in danger from several flanking American companies, de Salaberry retreated to the camp perimeter, where he became separated from both the Indians and all but a few of the Voltigeurs. These men stayed with de Salaberry as he skirmished with American units until dusk.[12]

Losses on both sides were light, American casualties being listed as one private and a Lieutenant Nash of the 34th United States Infantry Regiment.[13] It was during his retirement along the cart road which flanked the Châteauguay River (and which he obstructed as he retired) that de Salaberry noted that the land and cover near the present Allans Corners, Quebec, offered a possible site to meet Hampton's force should it move north.[14] De Salaberry was aware that Hampton faced the alternatives of moving west to the St. Lawrence or north toward Montreal; in the latter event, the Canadian knew where he would make his stand, should the choice be his.

Hampton's sole attempt at a diversionary tactic, made in the hope of drawing off some of Montreal's defenders, was to send a small force to carry out an unnecessary raid on the small Canadian settlement at Missisquoi Bay.[15] The ruse, however, was unsuccessful, as Sheaffe, while taking note of the raid, nonetheless authorized no move against the enemy "except under circumstances that shall afford the most decided prospect of success, and threaten but little risk."[16] Hampton did not attempt further to divert British attention.

With the receipt of Armstrong's letter of 16 October ordering him to approach the mouth of the Châteauguay, Hampton was able to begin his march northward. His first units crossed the border into Canada on the morning of 21 October 1813. The road conditions were so poor that several days were occupied in getting the whole force under way. Left behind, 1,500 militia who flatly refused to cross were used to guard the stores and the Plattsburg route.[17]

The British command to the north had kept aware of events at Four Corners through the use of patrols and lone agents. The movement undertaken by Hampton, however, was not immediately brought under harrassment.[18]

De Salaberry had done his job well, and the initial problem facing Hampton was that of moving effectively along the skillfully blockaded cart road beside the Châteauguay.
An extensive wood of eleven or twelve miles in front, blocked up with felled timber, and covered by the Indians and light troops of the enemy, was a serious impediment to the arduous task of opening a road for the artillery and stores. Brigadier General Izard with light troops and one regiment of the line, was detached early in the morning to turn these impediments in flank, and to seize on the more open country below, while the army, pre-

ceded by a strong working party, advanced on a more circuitous but practicable route for a road. The measures completely succeeded, and the main body of the army reached the advanced position on the evening of the 22nd. The 23rd and 24th were employed in completing the road and getting up the artillery and stores.[19]

The "advanced position" was a settlement clearing in the woods near the junction of the Outardes and Châteauguay rivers, owned by a man named Spears.[20]

Izard's men suddenly attacked the small picket at Spears' at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon of 21 October, as a squad of local sedentary militia and about 10 Indians prepared dinner outside their small blockhouse. One defender was killed in the brief skirmish and an escapee probably carried the word of Izard's surprise arrival to authorities further downstream. Occupying the site, Izard set about the preparation of a camp which Hampton's main force subsequently occupied.[21]

From this position, through information provided by his informants ("guides") and patrols of his dragoons, Hampton was able to evaluate over several days the nature of the defensive position the Canadians were establishing facing him. He knew, it would appear, of their initial lines of breastworks and of the ford to the rear which invited a flanking movement or encirclement.[22] By 25 October, he decided :

An effort was judged necessary to dislodge them ; and if it succeeded, we should be in possession of a position which we could hold as long as any doubts remained of what was passing above, and of the real part to be assigned to us.[23]

Knowing of the ford or fords in the rear, Hampton determined that to attempt to flank the apparently well-entrenched position before him presented the best possibility for success without undue casualties.

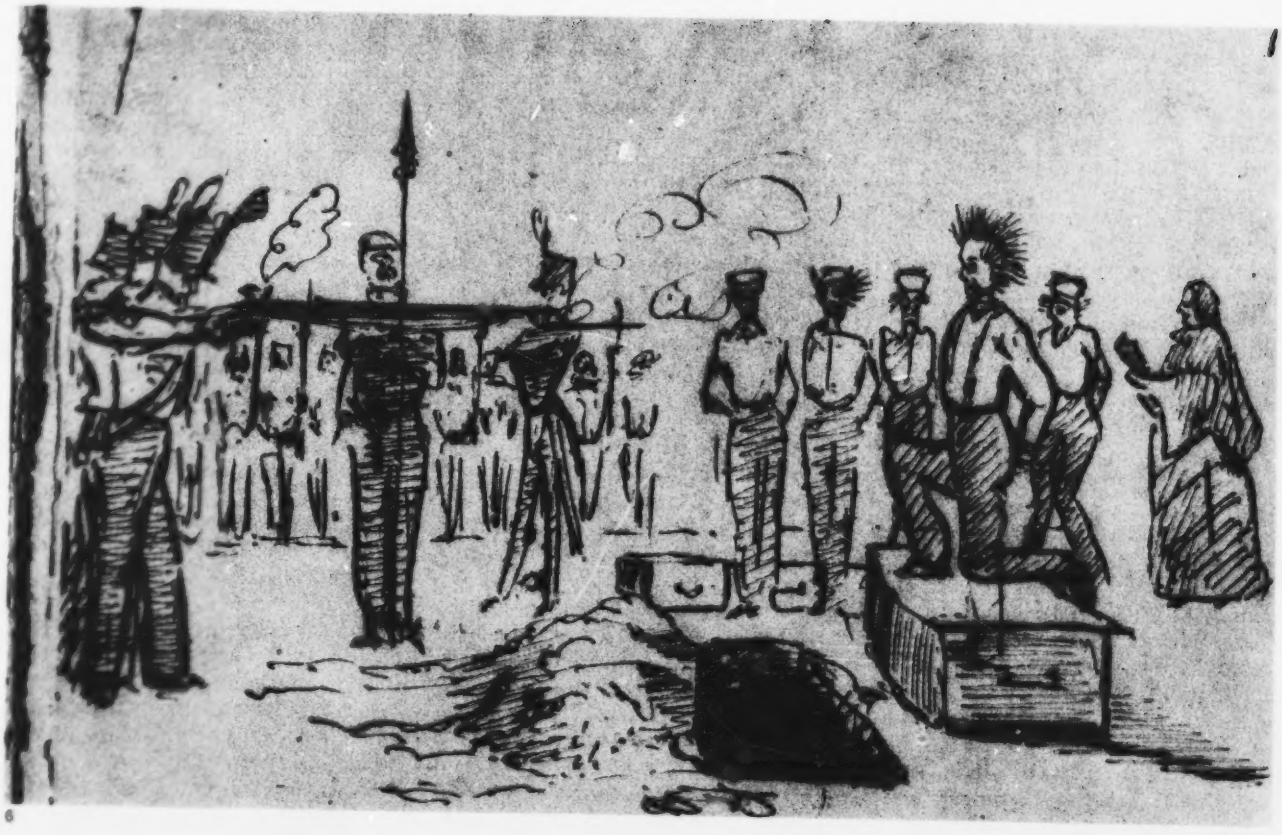
Colonel Purdy with the light corps, and a strong body of infantry of the line, was detached at an early hour of the night of the 25th, to gain this ford by the morning, and to commence his attack in the rear, and that was to be the signal for the army to fall on in front, and it was believed the pass might be carried before the enemy's distant troops could be brought forward to its support.[24]

On the Canadian front, the arrival of Izard's force at Spears' and the report of that action had engendered quick response. The officer responsible for the picket, Major Henry of the Beauharnois Sedentary Militia, sent the message from his post to de Salaberry, who in turn informed de Watteville.[25] Meanwhile, Henry ordered a party composed of the left and right flank companies of the 5th Battalion Select Embodied Militia under Captains Levesque and Debartzch and 200 of the Beauharnois Sedentary Militia to proceed up the Châteauguay River road some six miles to the edge of the woods where lay the ground de Salaberry had chosen for defensive positions. This location was some three miles from the ravines making up those positions.[26]

An overnight camp was made here, and the next morning Lieutenant Colonel de Salaberry arrived with two companies of the Voltigeurs and Ferguson's Light Company of the Canadian Fencibles. De Watteville had ordered de Salaberry and the Voltigeurs to move at once to the advance post at La Fourche, and on arrival there, de Salaberry pressed on to the camp of the troops Henry had sent on in the interim. With de Salaberry's arrival, the whole body marched swiftly along the cart track through the dense hardwood bush until it reached the position de Salaberry had determined upon. Here they began almost immediately to organize a defensive position as de Watteville hurriedly arranged for the collection of more troops to move upriver as well.[27]

The spade and axe work of completing the positions took added impetus from the sighting, almost as the Canadians arrived at their position, of American patrols nearby. On 24 October de Salaberry undertook improvements to his position : drawing rotating working parties from the Sedentary Militia, and providing them with a covering picket of Voltigeurs and some of the Fencibles, de Salaberry set about the construction of an abatis, or log entanglement, some distance in front of the breastworks. As well, a small log blockhouse was built slightly to the rear of the abatis, on a position which gave a reasonably "long" view of the river. The ground before these positions was cleared of cover as far as was practical. This clearing then adjoined the beginnings of more or less cleared land stretching to Spears', excluding the heavily-wooded opposite river bank, thereby giving the abatis defenders a long view of fire. It was against these positions that Hampton moved on Tuesday, 26 October.[28]

6 Scenes at La Prairie, 1812-13, by unknown artists. A gruesome little ink sketch showing the execution of condemned military personnel. Of interest are the hints at uniform styles, the graphically portrayed fear of the prisoners, and the benign smile on the religious figure at the right. Contemporary with the locale at the time of the Battle of Châteauguay. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



The Battle Site

"Témoin Oculaire" has been identified as Michael O'Sullivan, serving at the time of the battle as a lieutenant with the 2nd Battalion Beauharnois Sedentary Militia.[1] His description of the position occupied by de Salaberry is as follows:

The Lt.-Col., who had the advantage of reconnoitring the whole country above Chateauguay, in his expedition to the American lines a few weeks before, knew well that the whole bank of the river could not afford a better position.

The wood abounded with deep ditches or ravines; and upon four of these, he established four lines of defense, the one after the other. The first three lines were upon an average, at the distance of about two hundred yards from each other; the fourth line was about half a mile in the rear, and commanded a ford to the right bank of the river, which it became important to defend in order to protect his left flank. Upon each of these lines, he caused a breastwork to be thrown up, extending some distance into the woods, so as to guard his right. The breastwork on the first line broke into an obtuse angle on the right of the road and ran along the windings of the ditch...In order to strengthen his position still more, De Salaberry ordered the next day a party of thirty axemen of the Beauharnois division to proceed in advance of the first line for the purpose of destroying the bridges and the abattis. *All the bridges for the distance of a league and a half in advance were completely destroyed, and a formidable* abattis *was made about a mile in front of the first line, extending from the bank of the river to about three or four arpents into the woods, where it was met on the right by a swamp, or* epinettière, *through which it was next to impossible to pass.*[2]

O'Sullivan had sent a copy of this account to de Salaberry, and inquired his opinion of its accuracy in relating the setting and events; de Salaberry left very little doubt that he considered O'Sullivan's account to be as true a picture as was possible, and he endorsed it heartily.[3] De Salaberry himself had mentioned in an earlier official letter "three advanced positions," the abatis, "situated two miles in front of the above stated positions, to which I marched on the 26th," and the able support of "Lieut.-Colonel McDonell, of the Glengarry Fencibles, who had taken up a ford position two days before the action."[4] Charles Pinguet's diary provides little in the way of description of the breastwork lines, but does mention the abatis.

Voyant que l'ennemi n'avançait pas, nous commençâmes à nous fortifier avec les arbres et à former des espèces de retranchements; c'est derrière ces retranchements que nous avons passé trois jours et trois nuits à guetter l'ennemi. À environ une demi-lieue plus haut que nous, il y avait une pointe de bois qui avançait jusqu'à la rivière; le chemin seul la traversait. Là, le colonel de Salaberry fit faire un abatis que nos picquets ont gardé depuis et où la bataille a eu lieu. C'était le dimanche que l'abatis fut commencé [24 October].[5]

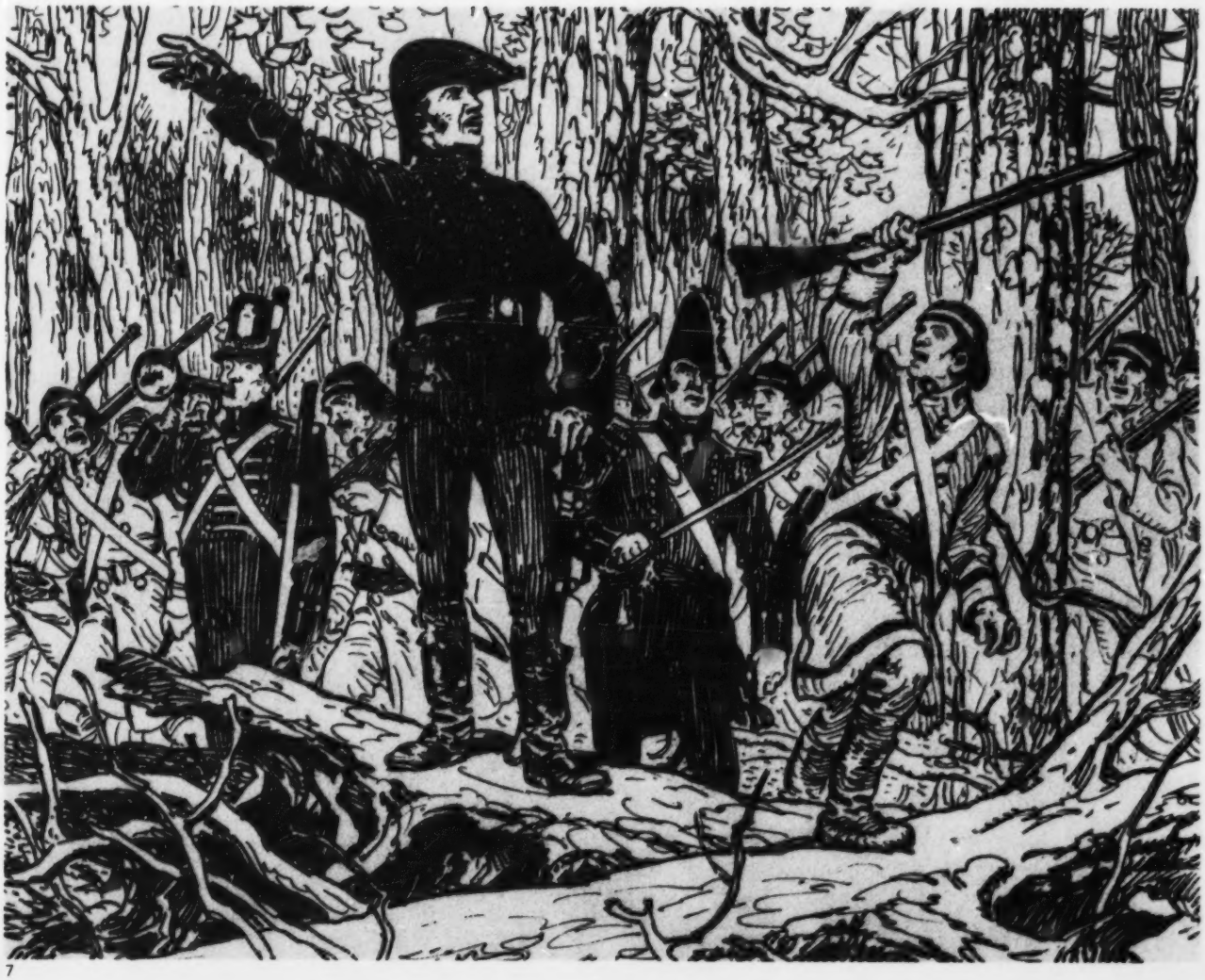
The map of the battle prepared by Colonel Joseph Bouchette for inclusion in his topographical atlas of 1815 was an attempt to picture accurately the four defence lines, the abatis, and the ford to the rear.[6]

Visible in the map is the first point of contention in histories of the battle, the fact that two fords actually existed in the rear. The difficulty lies in determining which of the two, the upstream or Grant's Ford, or the downstream or Morrison's Ford, was the principal ford mentioned in both American and British accounts. The ford at Morrison's indicated as "barracks" in Bouchette's map is described by an eyewitness to the battle as having "quite an entrenchment thrown up between our house and the river to cover the ford; there was no fortification on the other side or at Grant's."[7]

If Morrison's account were true, this would suggest that "Morrison's" ford was the one at which Macdonell commanded, while not ruling out the possibility of movements across Grant's Ford, nor of American intentions to attack the latter.

The most authoritative plan of the battle, that prepared by Colonel Hertel de Rouville,[8] supports the possibility that Grant's Ford, to the "side" of the British position, was used for the crossing of Daly's company. On the other hand, de Rouville indicated breastworks or abatis on the far bank which O'Sullivan does not mention, and which Morrison flatly rejects. As most other plans used in secondary accounts are versions of either Bouchette's or Benjamin Sulte's (which appears as a combination of Bouchette's and de Rouville's), the only plan which seriously contends with Bouchette for accuracy is de Rouville's, on the basis of the latter's presence at

7 The Battle of Châteauguay, by C. W. Jefferys, showing his interpretation of de Salaberry directing his troops during the battle. Although the uniforms shown are not entirely accurate, the general mood of the action behind the abatis is well portrayed. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)



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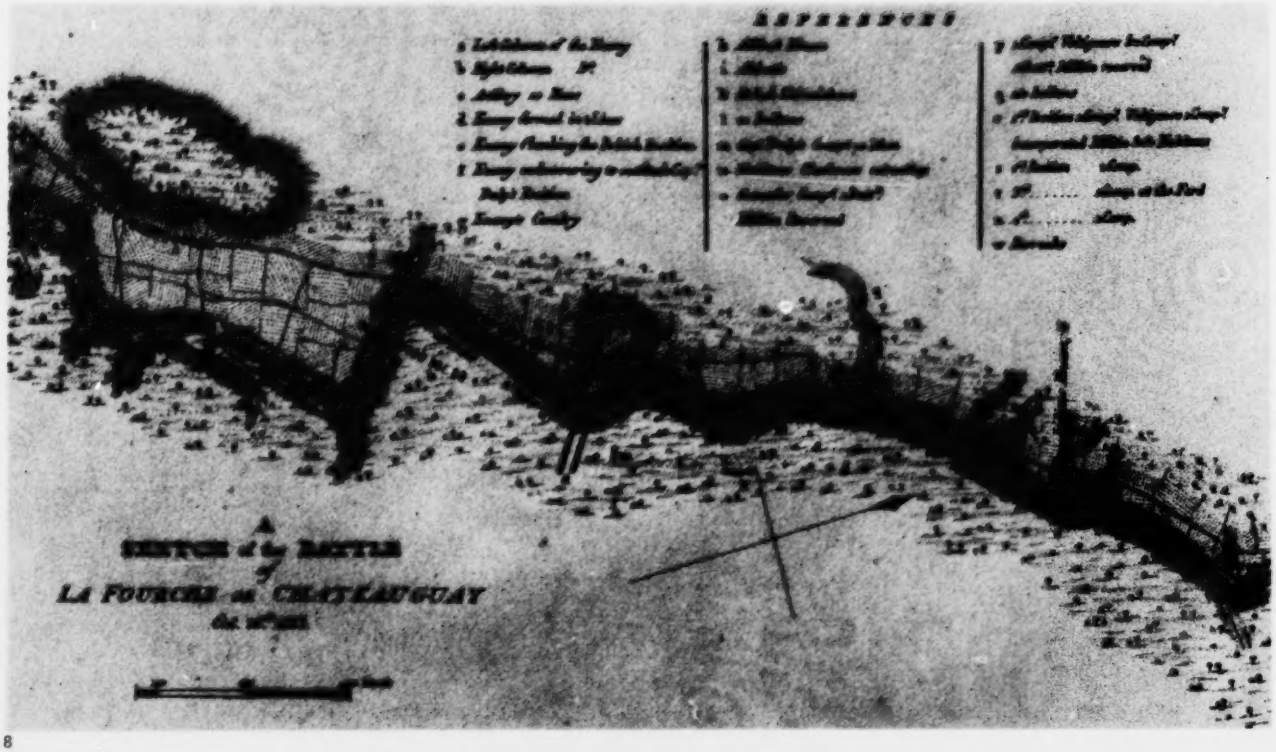
8 A sketch of the Battle of Châteauguay by Joseph Bouchette. (*Joseph Bouchette, A Geographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada, with Remarks upon Upper Canada, and on the Relative Connexion of Both Provinces with the United States of America* [London: W. Faden, 1815], *facing p. 117.*)



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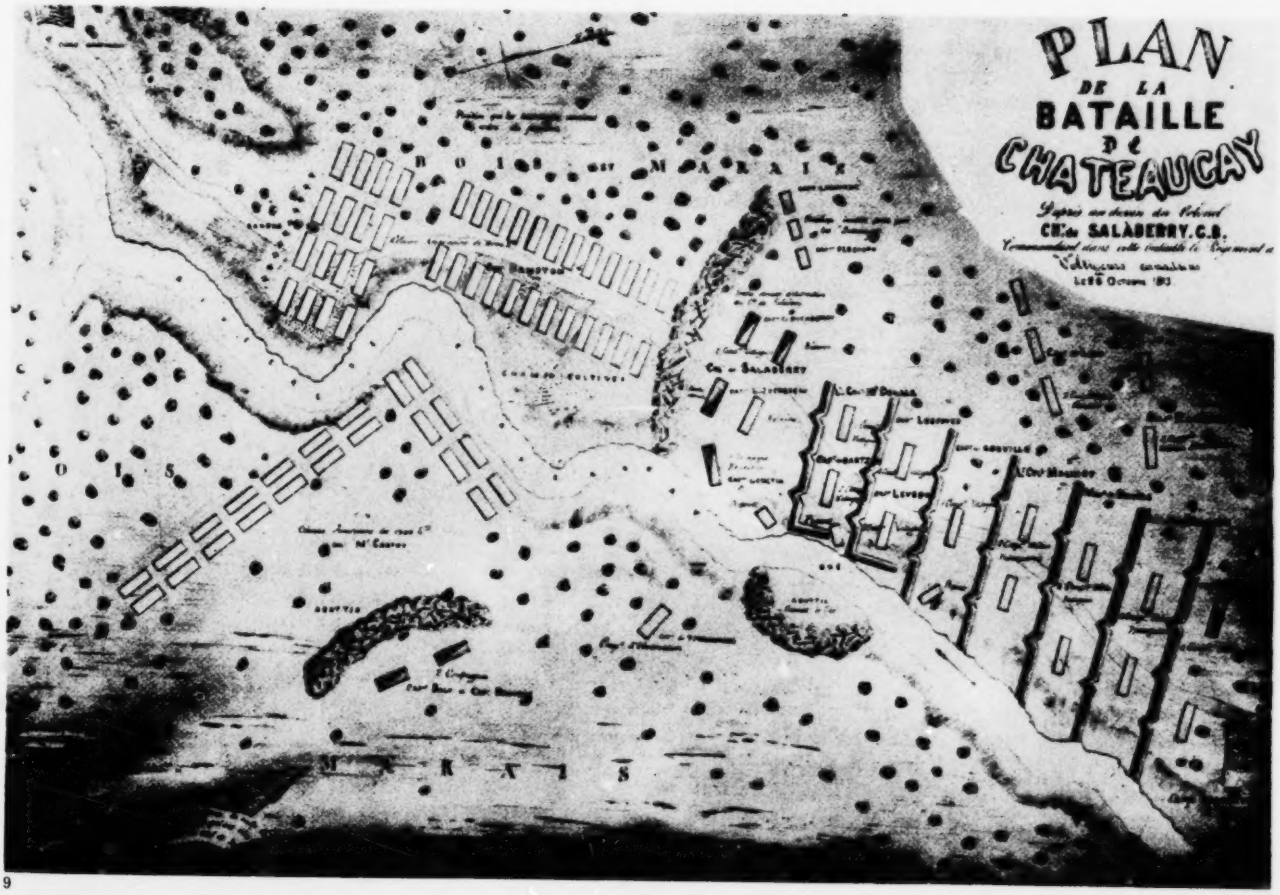
9 Plan of the Battle of Châteauguay as given by Benjamin Sulte. This plan is probably based on the de Rouville sketch of the battle. (*Benjamin Sulte. L'Histoire de la Milice Canadienne-Française: 1760-1897* [*Montreal: Desbarats et Cie, 1897*], *p. 35.*)



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the battle area, if not the firing lines. On the other hand, de Rouville's indication of a far-shore abatis contradicts other sources, one of which was written by a man who lived permanently in the battle area afterward.

De Rouville's most specific departure from the O'Sullivan account, Bouchette's map and de Salaberry's comments, is the picturing of no less than seven fortified lines behind the abatis as opposed to four. Six lines are proposed by Sellar.

Between what is known as Allan's Corners and the foot of Morrison's rapids, a distance of four miles, there are six of these gullies. The preparation of the first three of these ravines [Major General De Watteville] *was entrusted to Major De Salaberry. The fourth, the most important, for it faced the ford at Morrison's, was assigned to Colonel Macdonell and his Glengarry Highlanders. The sixth line De Watteville kept in his own charge, and here he planted his artillery.*[9]

De Watteville's actual position, and those of any artillery, may have been at La Fourche, the junction of the English River with the Châteauguay some miles downstream where, Morrison relates, "De Watteville was in command, having his headquarters at Baker's (the old place at the mouth of the English River)...The camp had a breastwork of logs and earth so as to command the English River, for they thought it possible the Americans might come that way." With the distance from Morrison's to the Allans Corners site being some two to three miles, the commencement of firing from the latter shortly after 10:00 A.M. should have been communicated, even by the noise, to de Watteville as it was to the other breastwork lines, and given him an opportunity, were he actually at the sixth line, to perceive the situation well before heavy firing began after 2:00 P.M. Indeed, Hampton's advance units on the left bank of the river were visible for a period of more than three hours. Action on the right bank, specifically involving the rear positions, occurred for a substantial period before and after noon. Yet, as de Salaberry notes, "no officer of superior rank came up until the action was over," which would put the time as somewhere approaching 3:00 P.M.[10] This might indicate that de Watteville was in fact aware of developments and directing movements from his "sixth line;" however, de Watteville later blamed de Salaberry, it would seem, for not informing him of the drama unfolding to the front.

I do not feel inclined to allow the individual merit on this occasion to be assumed by Lt. Col. De Salaberry, because that officer was culpable in a high degree in neglecting to report to his commanding officer the approach of the enemy, which must have originated either in his being surprised or from a wilful neglect, in either case highly censurable.[11]

As it is unlikely that an active general officer of de Watteville's stature would sit about in the presence of gunfire awaiting official confirmation without undertaking some action, it would appear reasonable that de Watteville's actual position was to the rear, at La Fourche, and that although he visited de Salaberry's positions prior to 26 October, he did not appear at the site until the afternoon of that day, riding in from La Fourche. De Watteville may have had proper grounds for annoyance: de Salaberry, in a manner to be repeated by Canadians serving under British officers, may well have consciously "neglected" to send word to La Fourche, where the news arrived with a message from Macdonell and the wounded being brought in by canoe.[12]

The abatis across the river indicated by de Rouville are, as has been noted, not mentioned in O'Sullivan's account, a point de Salaberry conceivably would have mentioned to the former had he been aware of them. More concretely, eyewitness Morrison indicates there were, in fact, no fortifications on the far shore. Thus it would appear that the large breastworks and abatis were to be found on the left, or de Salaberry's shore. The militia picket for the ford may have put up some defence, but the later skirmishes among the trees on that side of the river indicate that any such works which may have existed were not greatly important.

Although neither de Rouville nor O'Sullivan mentions a blockhouse, Bouchette's map indicates one near the river bank. Morrison pinpoints it as "a rude blockhouse at Robert Bryson's stables," and this spot coincides with the location given by a present-day area resident, Wilfred Bryson of Allans Corners, on the basis of family tradition. No other descriptions are available as to the design or size of the probably modest log structure, other than general texts of the period on blockhouse construction.[13]

The question of the de Rouville map and its seven fortified lines remains unanswered. Establishing the bounds of the Canadian position as the abatis and Morrison's ford, the positioning of four, or possibly five, breastwork lines is possible; yet O'Sullivan's insistence on the four lines leads one to conclude that de Salaberry's initial force prepared the four breastwork lines. After his inspection tour prior to 26 October, de Watteville may have dispatched additional troops from La Fourche who may have been required by their numbers to put up makeshift defences as they arrived, increasing the original lines by possibly two or three. There seems little reason to doubt de Rouville's "order of battle" for the companies involved; if this number, and the possibility of the later defensive works, are accepted (barring simple inaccuracy on de Rouville's part), then a defensive position incorporating the abatis, the four principal breastwork lines, the defences at Morrison's ford, and the possibility of later additional entrenchments thrown up by the reinforcements can reasonably be pictured. Where precisely the reserve companies stood is not clear, with de Rouville providing very little geographical reference.

It is apparent that the right bank of the river was heavily wooded and contained swampy areas; that the defensive positions themselves lay in a wooded area of some density, and that their forward point, the abatis, lay at the edge of a relatively cleared area beside the cart track, which extended back to Spears' and Hampton's camp, and that to the west of the abatis lay swampy land. The question of what comprised the forest cover is answered partly by Bouchette, who mentions the seigneuries of Sault Saint-Louis, La Salle, Châteauguay and Beauharnois as being "abundantly watered, rising in general from the front in gradual swells, clothed with hard timber, to the province line, bounding that tract in the rear." Morrison relates that the wood "below" the blockhouse by the river bank was pine with hemlock "above." He also mentions the presence of elm.[14]

The site at present is incorporated into a well-designed rural farm system, in which natural erosion in the intervening years has no doubt reduced the clarity of natural features. For purposes of identification, the position of de Salaberry's abatis lies approximately in a shallow semi-circle running from the river edge across the road, passing a short distance downstream of the present marker, and angling in toward a wide gully on the edge of which the marker is situated. The location of the blockhouse was some 50 feet upriver from a log building now on the larger piece of crown property, and on the edge of the river slope. Comparison of Bouchette's map of 1815 with present maps indicate a likelihood that the present road lies on the path of the original cart track.[15]

The Battle

Having determined the nature of the defences confronting him, Major General Hampton ordered the march of the flanking party at sunset on the evening of 25 October. Under the command of Colonel Robert Purdy, this force, consisting of the 4th, 33rd, and 34th U.S. Infantry Regiments plus some unknown "volunteer and light" units, crossed the Châteauguay River from the American camp most probably at a spot where a ford is located and which later was the site of an Ormstown grist mill. Under their none too reliable guides, these units then set out on the overnight trek in single file through the heavy woods which hopefully would put them beside the ford(s) to the rear of the Canadian position as Hampton perceived it.[1]

It was immediately following the departure of Purdy that Hampton received one of the intelligences which would later affect his decisions when he came to face de Salaberry.

I had returned to my quarters from Purdy's column about 9 o'clock at night, where I found a Mr. Baldwin, of the quarter-master general's department, who put into my hands an open paper containing instructions to him from the quarter master general respecting the building of huts for the army in the Chateauguay, below the line. This paper sunk my hopes, and raised serious doubts of receiving the efficacious support which had been anticipated. I would have recalled the column, but it was in motion, and the darkness of the night rendered it impracticable. I could only go forward.[2]

The darkness of the night very nearly rendered Purdy's march impracticable as well. Rather than the silent march to a quick capture of the ford, Purdy's force struggled with difficulty through a wet and confusing night which was not illuminated by help from the "reliable" guides Hampton had assigned to Purdy.

We commenced the march at sundown, and by sunrise the next morning had gained only six miles. Here we were discovered by the enemy and fired on from the opposite side of the river. During that night we were repeatedly misled by our guides, who knew nothing of the country, having never been that way, and at the time we were attacked, they had led us into a thick cedar growth or swamp on the banks of the river and immediately opposite the enemy's position, and knew not how to extricate us. Incredible as it may appear, general Hampton entrusted nearly one half of his army, and those his best troops, to the guidance of men, each of whom repeatedly assured him that they were not acquainted with the country, and were not competent to direct such an expedition.[3]

Dawn of Tuesday, 26 October, saw Purdy in heavy bush on the right bank of the Châteauguay, still some distance upriver of the abatis line, rather than near Morrison's or Grant's Ford; Hampton mustering his main body to move from the Ormstown camp against the abatis, and the Canadians not very well prepared for the arrival of either.[4]

It will be recalled that as part of the defensive preparations, de Salaberry had posted a picket on the far or right bank to prevent an unannounced attack on the fords. Identified by O'Sullivan as "sixty of the Beauharnois Militia," this body is identified by Wood as 40 members of the *Chasseurs d'Elite de Châteauguay*, under the command of Captain Jean-Baptiste Brugière. Again, the only clue to the exact position of this picket is the de Rouville plan, and it suggests that, if the ford depicted is Grant's, Brugière's company was posted slightly upriver of the present "ford defence" cairn.[5]

On de Salaberry's side of the river, O'Sullivan indicates that a working party was busy at the abatis, protected in front by a picket of 20 Voltigeurs under Lieutenant Guy and in the rear by another picket under the command of Lieutenant Johnson, also of the Voltigeurs. Present as well with Guy were 10 Fencibles. As Pinguet relates,

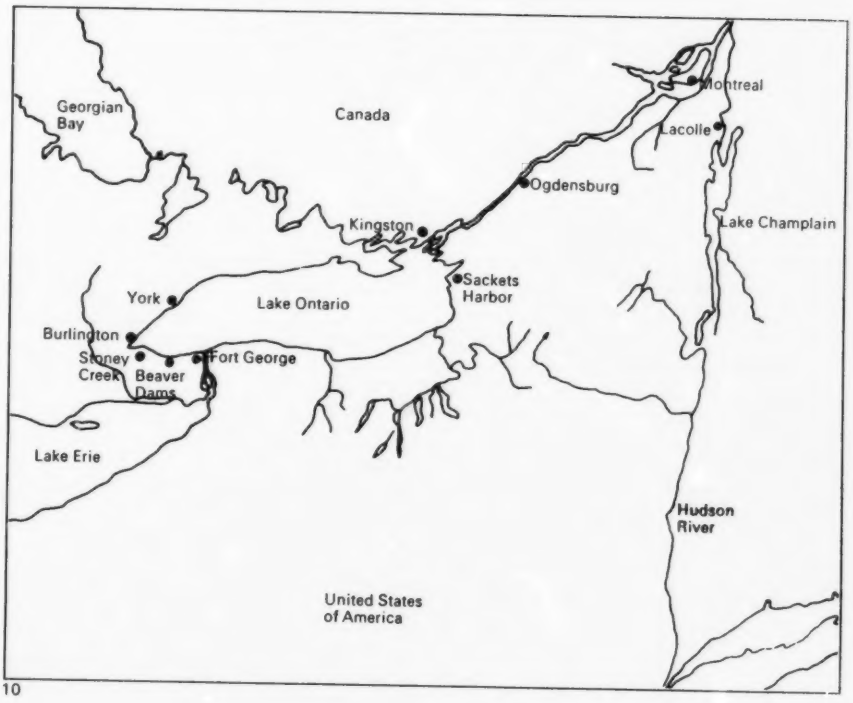
Le mardi (26 octobre) comme les bûcherons (de l'abatis placé en avant des quatres lignes) finissaient quelque chose qui manquait, un parti de dix hommes de notre compagnie (Fencibles) et de vingt des Voltigeurs, qui étaient en avant (plus loin que l'abatis) pour protéger les travailleurs, aperçurent l'avant-garde de l'ennemi qui s'avançait. Les nôtres tirèrent quelques coups de fusil sur l'ennemi, ce qui donna l'alarme. Notre compagnie (Ferguson) fut aussitôt envoyée à l'abatis avec ordre de commencer et de soutenir l'action, ce qui fut fait.[6]

10 Eastern areas of operations to October 1813.

The remainder of the Canadian forces were to the rear in the fortified positions along the gullies.

Among the more remarkable troop movements made by Canadian forces was a 60-hour march to the advanced positions at Châteauguay by the 1st Light Battalion of Select Embodied Militia, which had been under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Macdonell of the Glengarry Light Infantry. The men of this battalion were predominantly French Canadian, with a number of English and Scots-Irish. After receiving orders on 21 October from Sir George Prevost to march immediately to the Châteauguay positions, the battalion gathered together flat-bottomed river scows and *bateaux* from the Kingston area and made a perilous, storm-tossed descent of the St. Lawrence through the Long Sault, Coteau, the Cedars, and Cascade rapids. After a brush with a severe storm at the western end of Lake St. Louis, they reached Beauharnois village on the evening of 24 October, setting off immediately at a quick pace along a narrow footpath which led toward de Salaberry's position, where they arrived on the morning of 25 October. Macdonell's exhausted men put up rude shelters on Morrison's land near the ford. Later, they would undertake the building of the breastwork at the rear ford.[7]

Under overcast skies on the morning of 26 October, Hampton directed Izard to form his infantry and accompanying dragoons into column on the cart track and, preceded by a small advance guard, move on the abatis. As



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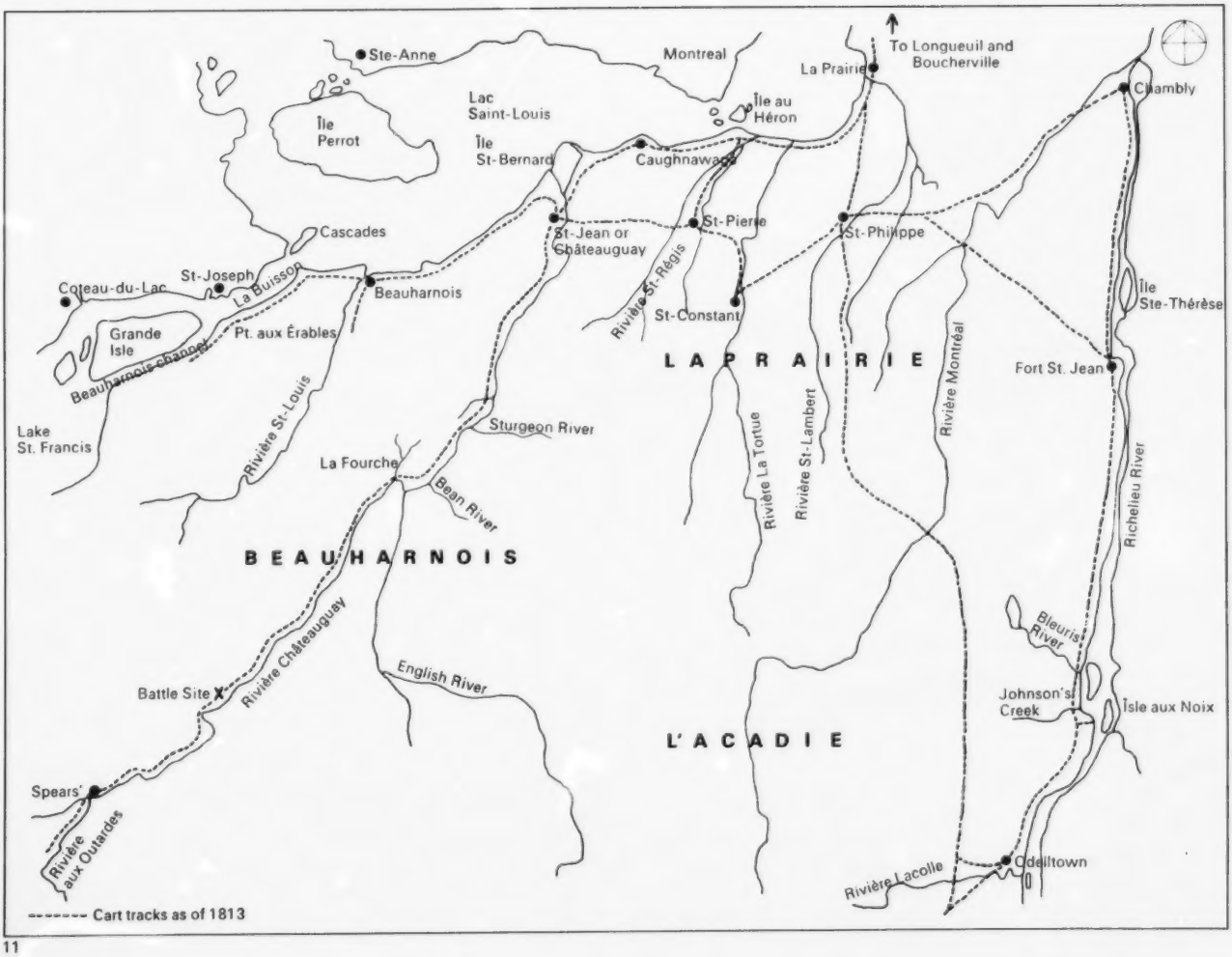
11 Areas of Canadian defensive movement, showing the principal settlements, cart trails and waterways of the period.



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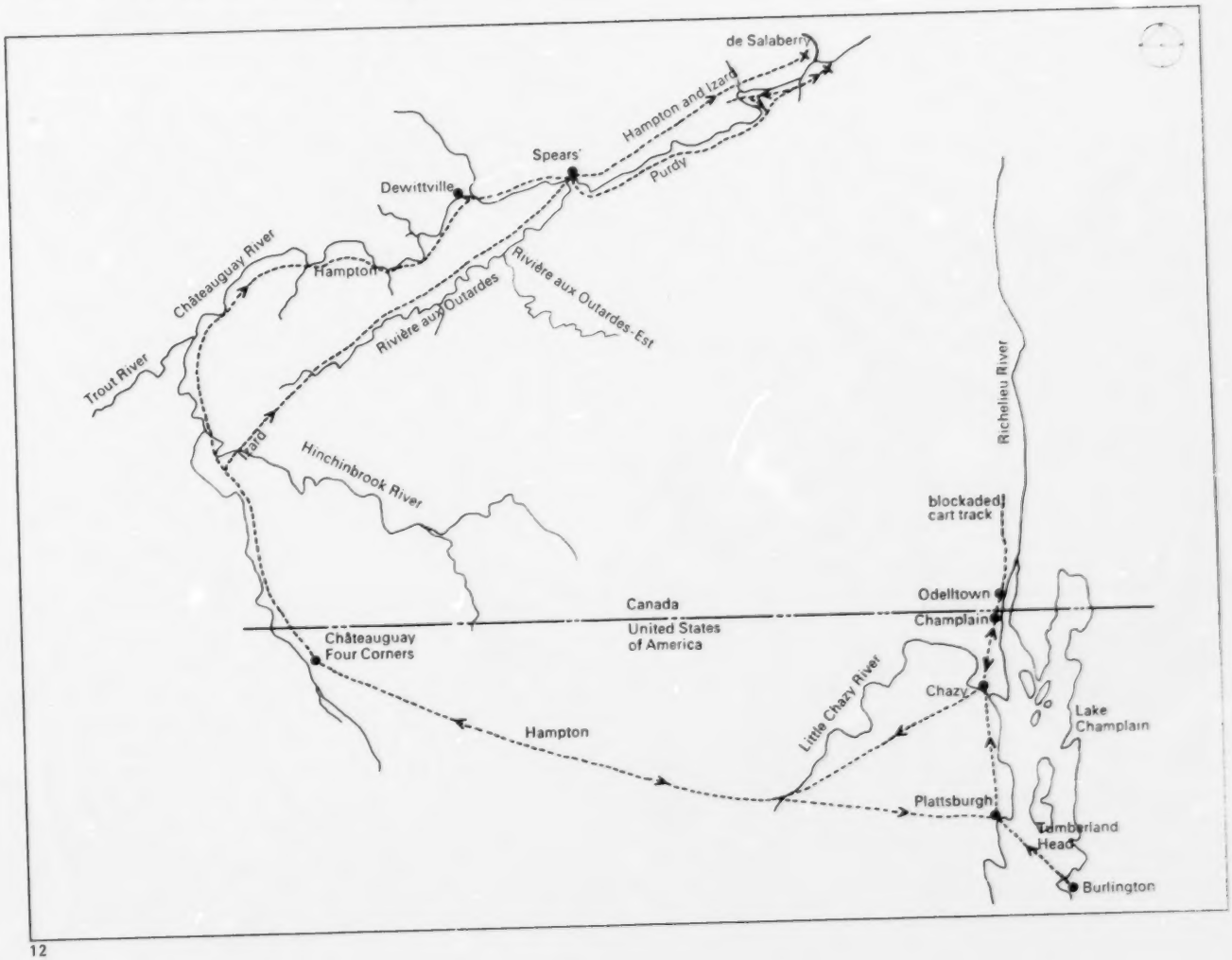
12 Principal American moves, October 1813. While Hampton followed the course of the Châteauguay, Izard pushed on by the Rivière aux Outardes and surprised a small picket at the clearing at Spears'. It was at Spears' that Hampton made his final camp before moving against de Salaberry.



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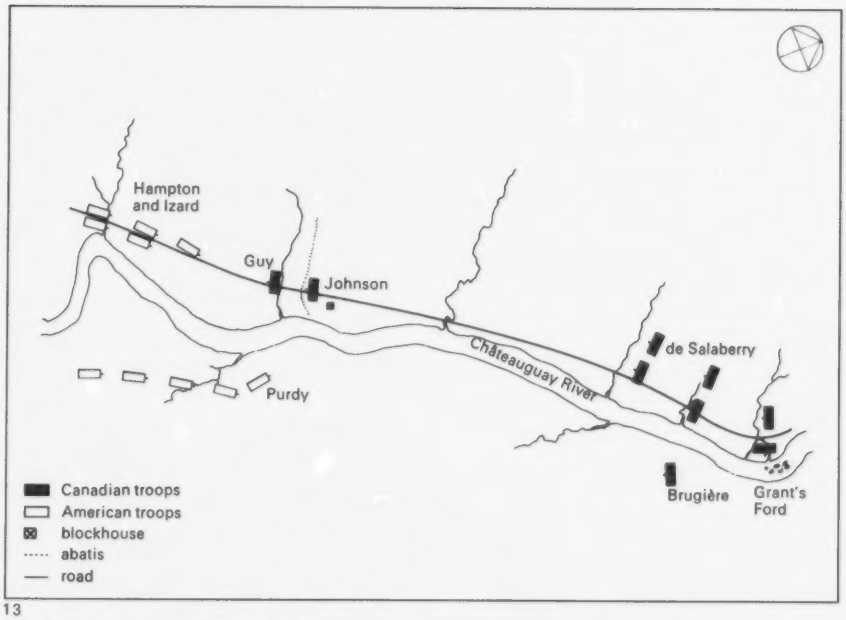
13 Positions on the battlefield at 10:00 A.M.
14 Positions on the battlefield at 10:30 A.M.

his troops crunched along the rutted cartway, Hampton awaited the expected sound of musketry from Purdy's attack. No such sound reassured him as he neared the abatis, nor was there any evidence to indicate that Purdy had made his attack earlier in the morning.[8]

At the abatis, the work party was well into the morning labour when, at approximately 10:00 A.M., Izard's lead party came into view of the sentries posted by Guy in the forward picket. Guy's Voltigeurs and Fencibles exchanged several shots with the American advance guard while the militiamen got to cover in the rear of the abatis, then retired into the abatis to join Johnson's men as Izard's impressive column came into view in the distance.[9]

Probably with more than one quiet word to providence at the sight of massed blue columns in the distance, Guy and Johnson's squads nevertheless continued a sharp exchange with the lead American party. As well as alerting the Canadians to the presence of Hampton, this skirmish may have helped orient Purdy and his floundering column in the heavy bush and marsh on the opposite shore.[10]

De Salaberry, in the rear at the breastwork positions, advanced hurriedly to the abatis at the first sign of fighting, taking with him Captain George Ferguson's Light Company of the Canadian Fencibles, two companies of Voltigeurs under Captains Jean-Baptiste and Michel-Louis Juchereau-Duchesnay, a party of about 22 Indians under Captain J.-M.



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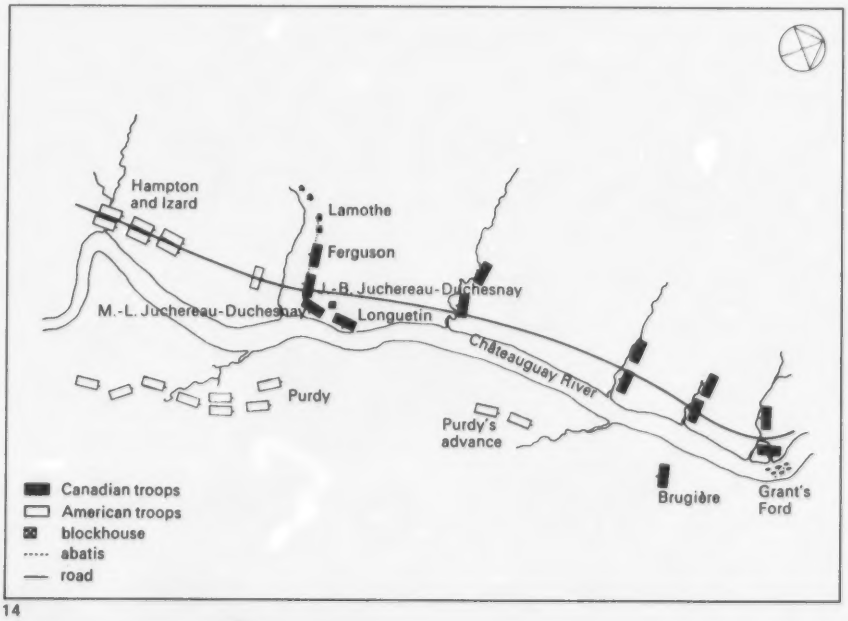

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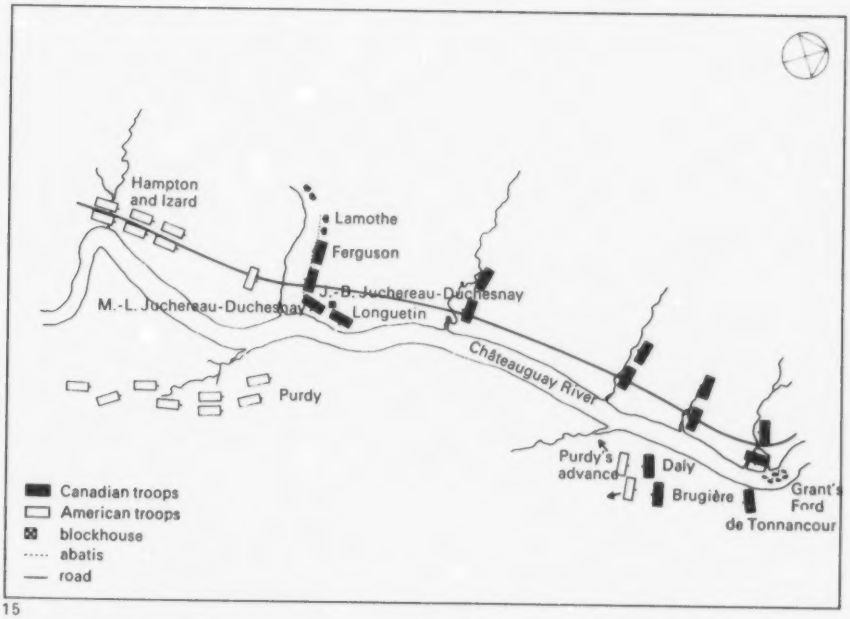
15 Positions on the battlefield at 11:00 A.M.
16 Positions on the battlefield at 12:00 M.



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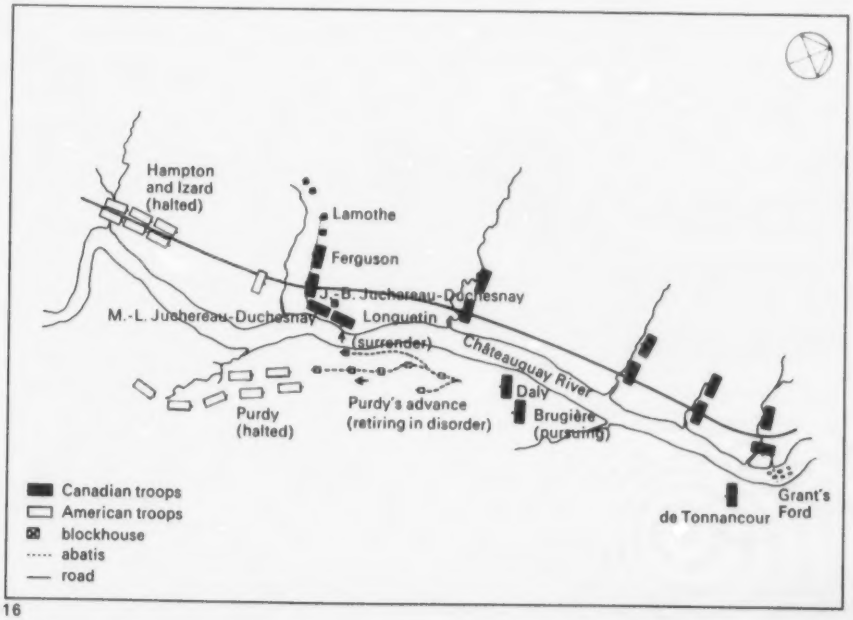

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Lamothe, and a company of the 2nd Battalion Sedentary Militia of Beauharnois, under Captain Joseph-Marie Longuetin, of which the working party may have formed part. Arriving at the abatis, de Salaberry found Guy and Johnson directing the defence, but not being pressed by the main American column some distance further to the rear; Hampton had received word from Purdy that the latter's position in the morning was short of the ford, and had decided to await the advent of that attack.[11]

As the firing at the abatis petered out and a silence broken only by an occasional shot settled over the site, de Salaberry quickly learned from Guy and Johnson what had occurred, and possibly of the presence of Purdy's hapless group on the far shore.
De Salaberry immediately began posting his companies. He sent Lamothe's Indians to push as far as possible into the thick bush flanking the slash of the abatis, where their whoops and stealthy movements added to the swampy terrain might aid in deterring any flanking attempt by the Indian-wary American troops. Closer on the right he placed Ferguson's Fencibles, sending some of these men out as skirmishers in the front tangle of the abatis. In the centre de Salaberry posted Jean-Baptiste Juchereau-Duchesnay's Voltigeur company, which extended out almost to the river bank. On the river end of the abatis and along the undergrowth-lined river

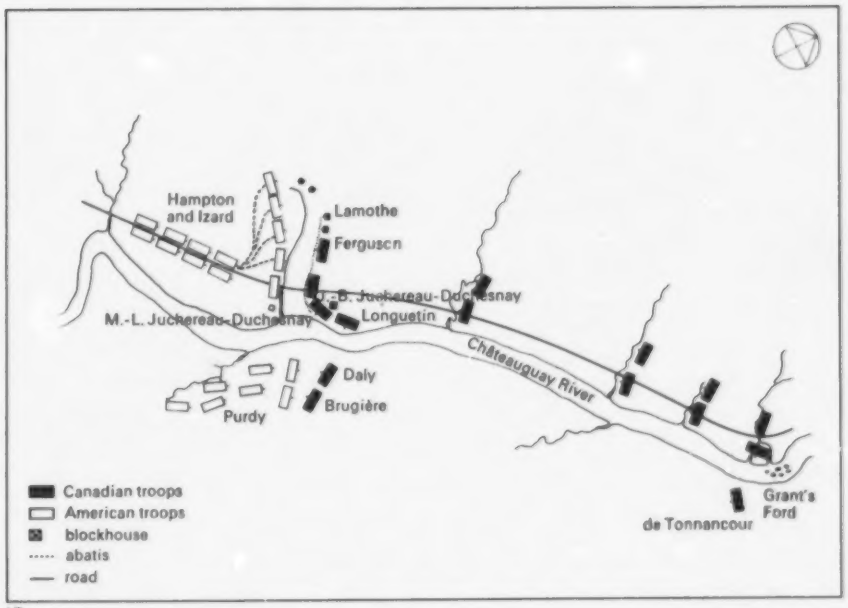
17 Positions on the battlefield at 2 :00 P.M.
18 Positions on the battlefield at 2 :30 P.M.

bank he placed Michel-Louis Juchereau-Duchesnay's Voltigeur company, to the left of which he placed Longuetin's company of militia. From there these two companies could fire from a flanking position on the American column suspected to be moving on the Chasseur picket across the river.

Thus posted, the Canadians looked to their priming and waited for a move from the halted mass of blue, white and silver in the distance across the stump-dotted clearings. Equally on their minds were the movements of the hidden American column they knew was paralleling the river. De Salaberry moved among them, using first names, talking encouragingly and calmly, no doubt with an eye to the morale of his outnumbered and seriously threatened troops.

De Salaberry, in the meantime, had informed Macdonell of the threat posed by Purdy, and Macdonell was prepared to respond whenever the movements on the far shore warranted. Having brought troops up from Morrison's to the first and second breastwork lines, Macdonell returned and ordered two companies of his Light Battalion to cross in support of Brugière.[12]

The need for this support was not long in coming. Purdy's advance party of two infantry companies came upon Brugière's company almost to the complete surprise of both, at about 11 :00 A.M. As Morrison relates, *It would be about 11 o'clock when we, standing in front of the house, heard*



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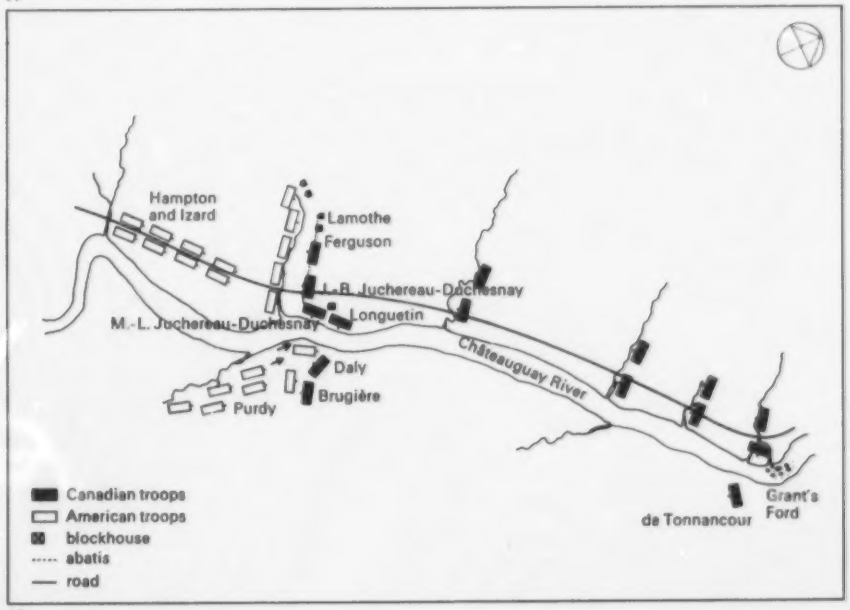


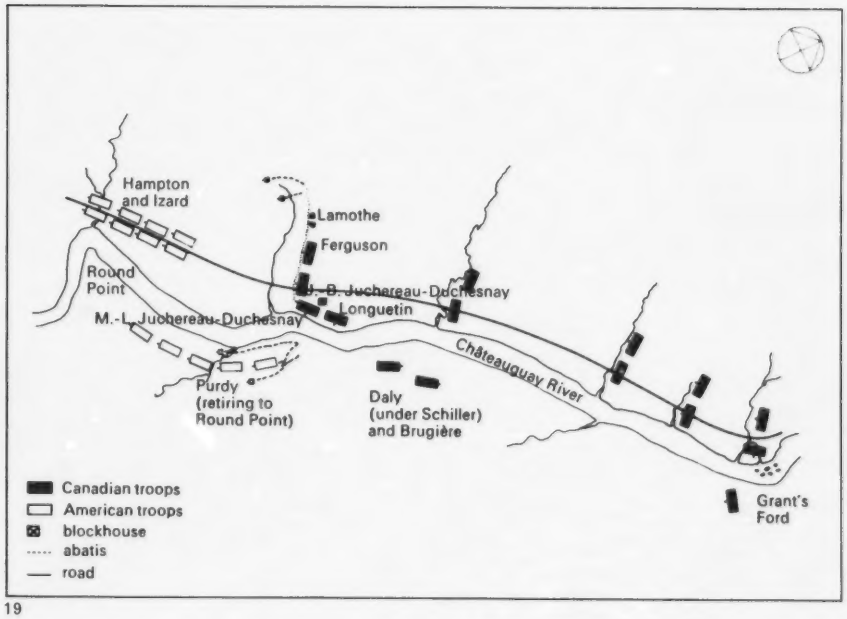
18

19 Positions on the battlefield at 3:00 P.M.

the first shots, and immediately saw the French sedentary militia and some Indians running away – the blue tuques of the former flying in the wind. My father was so angry to see them running, that he said he could fire on them. There was quite a hot fire for a while, and several on both sides fell. I understood the Americans fell back because they did not anticipate resistance, and finding it, supposed the woods to be full of Indians. The skirmish, I understood, to have been made with two companies of Purdy's advance. They had made no road, but came through the woods in file.

Brugière's Chasseurs had indeed been shaken by their first encounter with the American regulars, but rallied almost immediately to the support of the companies Macdonell had sent across. These companies were Captain Charles Daly's left flank company of the 3rd Battalion Lower Canada Select Embodied Militia, and Captain G. G. de Tonnancour's left flank company of the 1st Battalion Lower Canada Select Embodied Militia, both of which formed part of Macdonell's Light Battalion.

Macdonell had directed Daly to support Brugière and pursue the Americans, who were in a shaky state of discipline at this point, while de Tonnancour's company was to hold in reserve in the vicinity of the near ford. Daly's and Brugière's sally against the two halted companies of Purdy's advance sent the latter retreating in some disorder toward Purdy's main column, still trying to reorganize itself after floundering through the swampy gully just upriver from the abatis line. This



19

20 The probable site of the blockhouse as identified by Bryson family tradition.
21 View of the general area of Izard's deployment as seen from in front of the abatis.

20

21

sally occurred quickly enough, and with the desired results. The observers of the Morrison family, watching from the banks of their farm clearing downstream at Macdonell's location, were able to turn their full attention to dinner at noon.[13]

As noon passed, Purdy's advance companies were retiring in some confusion upriver. Daly and Brugière, some distance to the rear, were pursuing them cautiously. De Salaberry's men looked at the waiting American column before them and wondered what had occurred on the far bank. Hampton sat awaiting developments which would favour his attack on the abatis, not knowing the flanking movement was already largely a lost cause.

To the retreating infantrymen of Purdy's two advance companies, the surprise at the sharp resistance Daly and Brugière had put up added to the glimpses caught of the Canadian reserve lines gave an impression of large numbers. The first returnees to Purdy's position, somewhat after 11 o'clock, reported these reserves to Purdy, who in turn sent off a messenger to Hampton informing him of the column's halt. With this news, Purdy gave up further movement downriver, and pondered again how to complete the regrouping of his scattered column after the disastrous blunder into the swamp which had occupied the morning. The point of Purdy's farthest advance, with the exception of the two advanced companies, was this swampy area just slightly upriver from the abatis line. Portions of his force would advance along the river bank to a point almost opposite the blockhouse, but the main body of Purdy's command had gone as far as it could that day.

Finally, at about 2 :00 P.M., Purdy received an order from a Colonel King, serving with Hampton's column, to retire four miles back upriver, ford the stream and rejoin the main army. This order immediately raises the question of Hampton's entire motivation : Why did he dispatch this order to Purdy, apparently *before* mounting the attack on the abatis, only to terminate his attack with the claim that Purdy's failure made a successful result impossible ? The possibility seems to be that Hampton was reluctant to carry out any attack at all.

Just as Purdy was considering this order, "the enemy made a furious attack on the column by a great discharge of musketry, accompanied by the yells of the savages." Daly and Brugière had closed the gap.[14]

Meanwhile, on the left bank, Hampton waited as noon, then 1 :00 P.M. passed. By 2 :00 P.M., he was prepared to act. There seems to be no evidence that he either heard, or was made aware of, the eleven o'clock skirmish near the ford until receiving Purdy's delayed message. The sound of musketry at 2 :00 P.M. might have indicated to Hampton that Purdy was indeed carrying the ford. During the long wait over noon, Hampton had allowed Izard's troops to prepare lunch around fires beside the cart track, with the exception of those advance men keeping an eye on the abatis. Now Hampton ordered Izard to move. Izard's column was formed on the roadway and advanced.

As they approached the abatis, it would appear that de Salaberry was prepared to seize the initiative from the Americans in opening fire, a move he may have felt would strengthen the morale of the Canadians. As soon as the huge American column appeared to be within range de Salaberry fired a single shot which, whether by design or accident, was seen to bring down a mounted American officer. Almost immediately the Canadian bugles sounded the "commence fire" and a roar of musketry burst from the abatis.

The American column did not remain still, however. Pausing only momentarily, Izard moved his companies into line to the left, facing the abatis. The American line began to deliver well-disciplined rolling volleys which contrasted with the irregular continuous fire from the abatis.[15]

As the abatis was curved, Izard had adjusted his line to it, thereby throwing most of his volleys into the lightly defended right of the Canadian line. He altered his front line, his men "filing up with speed," however, and the redirected fire quickly drove in the few Fencible skirmishers. At the sight, the American infantrymen shouted of victory.

De Salaberry, apparently sensing a moment of possible crisis, immediately ordered his men to return the shout through the smoke, and this they did loudly, with the shout being echoed by the whooping of Lamothe's Indians on the right. De Salaberry also sounded the advance on his bugles, and Macdonell, situated at the first breastwork line, "caused the bugles to be sounded in all directions, so as to induce the enemy to believe that we

were in far greater numbers." Macdonell also despatched two reserve companies to march to the abatis, and undertook to move up himself.

The clever counter use of noise at this point in the abatis fight led Hampton's line to be misled as to the size of de Salaberry's force and the reserves, and even for a brief moment to expect an attack. The moment when the massive American line might have surged over the abatis had been averted by a clever *ruse de guerre*. Almost immediately thereafter, somewhat after 2 :00 P.M., Izard's companies slackened their fire, "as if their attention were directed to the other side of the river."[16]

On the other side, Daly's and Brugière's attack at 2 :00 P.M. had somewhat confused Purdy's force, and in the interval when Izard's column wheeled into line before de Salaberry, Purdy was attempting to organize a coherent defence. As Izard's fire slackened, de Salaberry turned his attention to aiding Daly and Brugière, who were closing in on Purdy's column once more in a seesaw series of sharp squad actions.

Standing behind the concealed Voltigeurs and militia along the river bank, de Salaberry shouted directions across to Daly, who was visible from time to time through the trees and undergrowth, "cautioning him to answer in the same language [French], that they might not be understood by the enemy."

For some time, Daly and Brugière had been engaging the outer fringes of Purdy's command. They approached Purdy's main body almost as de Salaberry was able to turn his attention to the far shore, at about 2 :15 P.M. With remarkable courage, Daly led the two companies into close range of Purdy's command, which had formed an uneven firing line in the bush. There Daly's and Brugière's companies fired a kneeling volley. Purdy's thunderous counter volley whistled over the heads of the kneeling Canadians, but wounded Captain Daly, who nonetheless ordered a charge to bayonet distance. As the Canadians moved forward Daly fell again with a severe wound, almost at the feet of the American line. Simultaneously, Captain Brugière fell with a wound, and command of the two companies fell to Lieutenant Benjamin Schiller of Daly's company. Pressed in difficult close-quarter attack by Purdy's men, Schiller ordered the Canadians to retire. The wounded Daly was in danger of being captured, and Schiller was attempting to carry him to the rear when an American rushed them ; Schiller was forced to fight a short but savage duel over the prone form of Daly before decapitating his opponent and managing to carry Daly to safety. The American infantrymen pressed forward with shouts of victory, and it would appear that only the density of the bush prevented severe casualties being inflicted on the members of the two Canadian companies, who were now retiring slowly under pressure from Purdy's forces.[17]

Hoping to pursue and surround Schiller's retreating men, Purdy's infantrymen burst in groups out of the woods and marsh on to the river bank and were astonished to look across almost directly at the Canadian position where de Salaberry, atop a stump, was eyeing them coolly through a telescope. As they emerged from the trees, the waiting Voltigeurs and Longuetin's militia opened a murderous fire.

The torrent of enfilading musket shot withered the American rush along the bank, and the men of Daly's and Brugière's companies were able to hold their ground. Groups of American infantry broke into the bush in confusion, leaving numerous casualties in the telling crossfire along the river shore. Purdy's attack, if not halted earlier, without doubt was halted now, at approximately 2 :30 P.M.[18]

Hampton had finally received Purdy's morning message, and had already despatched his own order to Purdy to retire ; now, from men who managed to swim across to his position in Izard's line and from what he could see of the disorganized withdrawal partially visible on the far bank, Hampton had clear grounds to conclude that the attack was a failure and withdrawal therefore justifiable. Subsequently he ordered Izard to retire from the field and march back in column to a position three miles in the rear to which the army's baggage and supplies had been brought. Izard's line reformed its column on the cart track in good order and discipline, and no fire was directed at them from the abatis.

Daly's and Brugière's men retired with their wounded to the ford positions and to the field hospital with two army surgeons who had been set up

22 The Battle of Châteauguay, by Henri Julien. A realistic depiction of the action at the abatis. Julien has erred in his uniforms and arms, however, showing military and civilian dress more of the style of 1820 than of 1813. As well, the troops in the position of the Voltigeurs are shown in shakos rather than bearskin caps. (*Public Archives of Canada.*)

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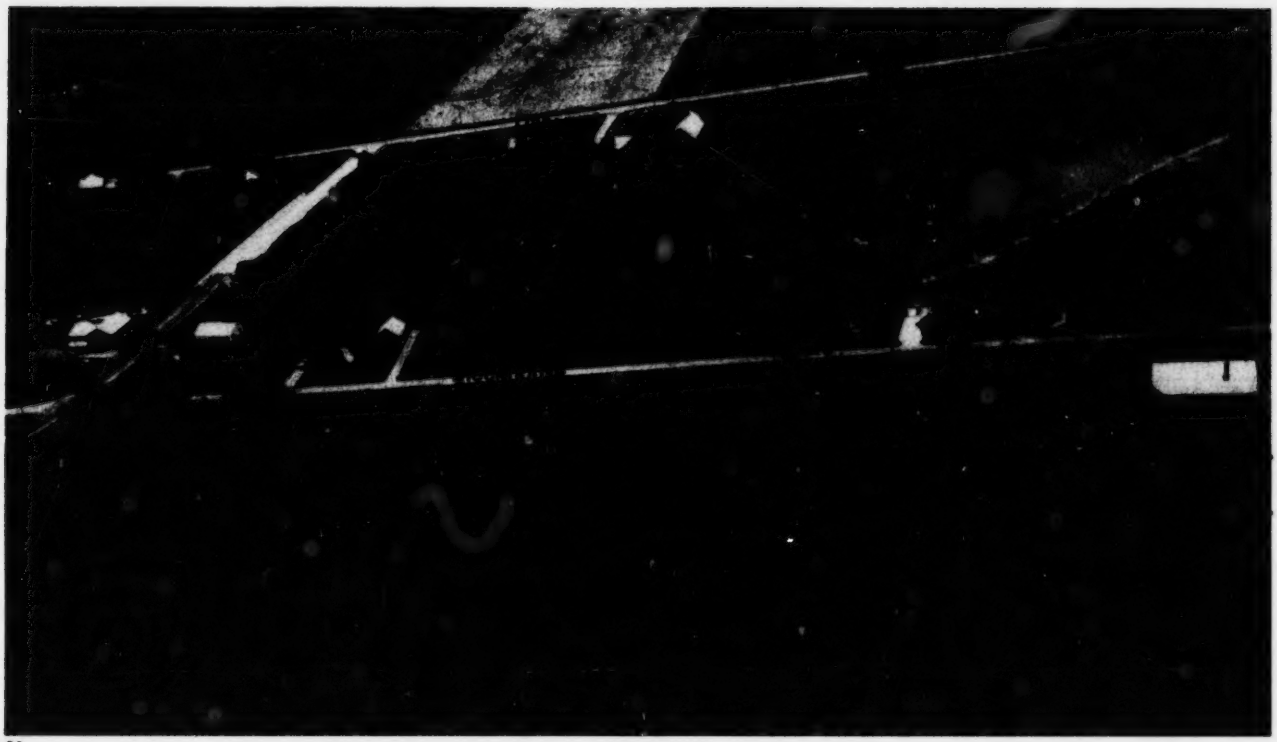
23 The general positions at the moment when Purdy's men, pressing along the river bank, received enfilading fire from the Canadian companies on the near shore; the confusion resulting among his men induced Purdy to retire upstream toward Round Point.



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in Morrison's house. Purdy, after the disastrous events on the river bank, had withdrawn with his column into an upriver bend of land known as "Round Point" and set up a defensive position. There he ordered rafts built, and the wounded were ferried to the far bank in the late afternoon. Purdy sent a messenger to Hampton asking for a guard to protect these wounded and his own crossing, but was astonished to learn that Hampton was already over a mile to the rear, making for camp.

Realising that his wounded, who now lay unguarded on the opposite shore, were helpless without defence, Purdy had his troops construct a floating log bridge from timbers and wood found along the river bank. By this bridge, about 100 men under a Major Snelling managed to cross and rejoin the main army to the rear, taking with them the wounded on that shore. This crossing, however, was carried out under fire from some of Lamothe's Indians, and several of Purdy's men were killed while crossing the log bridge. As for the remainder, Purdy relates,

The remainder of my force, exhausted by the excessive exertions of the preceding night, and weary with the fatigues of the day, not having had a moment either for rest or refreshment, were compelled to endure the privation of sleep another night. We retired two or three miles and took a position. At about 12 o'clock the enemy came up and made an attack upon us, but were soon routed.[19]

Morrison tells of hearing this "attack," but maintains that the American troops were in fact engaging each other. No evidence exists to indicate that any of the Canadians were abroad from the abatis that night, with the exception of some of Lamothe's Indians, and it is probable that Purdy's scattered forces were engaging each other as much as the watchful Indians.

At the Canadian line, the primary business at this time continued to be the transport of wounded and any American casualties the Indians had not reached to the field hospital which had been established at Morrison's.

As Izard's line was withdrawing from the clearing before the abatis, de Watteville, followed by Sir George Prevost and members of his staff, galloped into the rear positions and made their way to de Salaberry's line. The latter apprised Prevost of the situation just past, even as Izard's last companies were vanishing down the cart track. Prevost paid de Salaberry an apparently genuine but somewhat reserved compliment, of which de Salaberry is said to have later remarked, "I hope he is satisfied, though he appeared cold." As Cruikshank puts it,

While the action was still in progress, Sir George Prevost arrived on the field accompanied by Major General de Watteville and witnessed the retreat of Izard's brigade. The troops in advance were soon afterward assembled and he [Prevost] *made an inspiriting address, thanking de Watteville for his judicious arrangements and de Salaberry for his good judgement in the selection of a position and skill and courage in its defence. Several other officers were personally commended and all ranks warmly praised for their bravery and steadiness. They were encouraged to persevere in the patient endurance of hardships and privations until they could be relieved by the troops advancing to their support. Another attack might reasonably be expected which could only be repelled by their good conduct and disciplined valour. De Watteville returned to... Ste.-Martine while Prevost* [retired to] *La Fourche, some distance in rear.*[20]

The line of Canadians at the abatis and the reserve positions spent the remainder of the rapidly fading afternoon with a watchful eye to the front, and slept that night, under miserable conditions, on the ground they had defended during the day. De Salaberry had sent out his pickets after the battle, and these, mostly Lamothe's Indians, had no doubt been the source of the fire at Purdy's log bridge. The pickets were eventually able to place themselves two miles further upstream than the posts which Hampton's main body had surprised in the early hours of the morning.

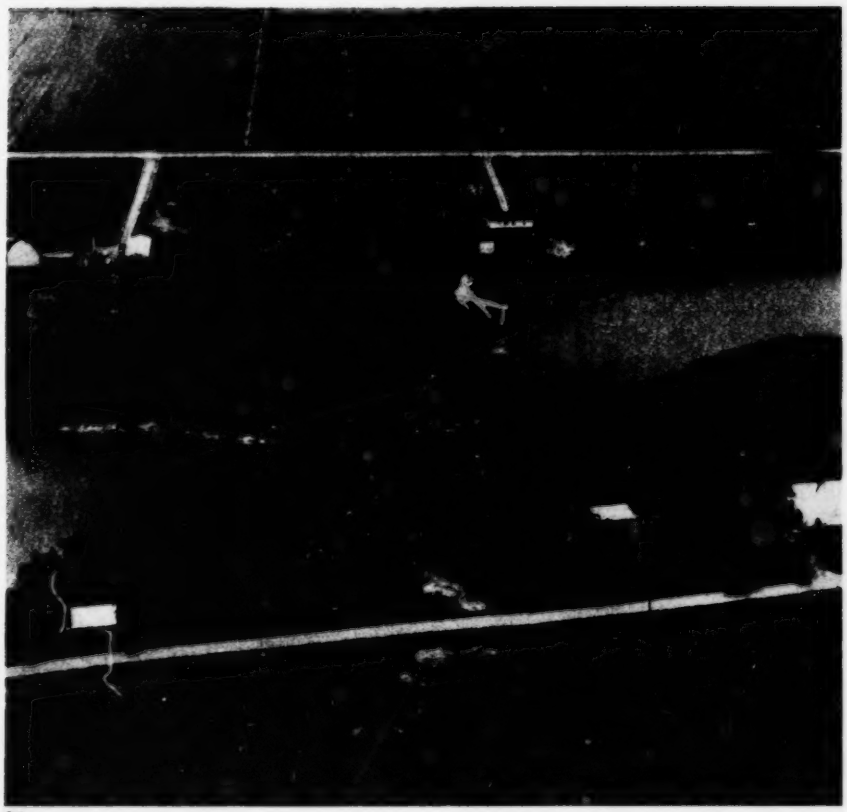
The most detailed numerical and positional breakdown of the Canadian force is Wood's, and although not entirely complete, runs as follows:

In The Firing Line

a On the north (left) bank of the Châteauguay:

De Salaberry	1
Captain Lamothe's Indians	22
Captain Ferguson's Fencibles	72
Voltigeurs (2 Companies) under the Captains Juchereau-Duchesnay	140
Captain Longuetin's Company, 2nd Battalion Beauharnois Sedentary Militia	66

24 Grant's Ford. From positions on the near side of the river, Daly's and de Tonnancour's companies crossed to reinforce Brugière; Daly and the latter engaged Purdy's two advance companies to the right of the house shown above the ford, and induced them to retire upstream.



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b On the south (right) bank of the Châteauguay:

Captain Charles Daly's Left Flank Company of the 3rd Battalion Lower Canada Select Embodied Militia, with Macdonell's Light Battalion	50
Captain G. G. de Tonnancour's Left Flank Company, 1st Battalion Lower Canada Select Embodied Militia, with Macdonell's Light Battalion	70
Captain J.-B. Brugière's Company, Chasseurs d'Elite de Châteauguay	40

In Reserve

a In the rear of de Salaberry:

Macdonell	1
5 Companies Canadian Voltigeurs, under Captains Bartzch (*sic*), L'Escuyer, Levêque, and de Rouville	300
8 Companies 2nd Battalion Lower Canada Select Embodied Militia under Lt.-Col. Malhiot, Majors de la Bruère and de Beaujeu, and Captain McKay	480

b In the right rear of de Salaberry:

1st Battalion Sedentary Militia of Boucherville, under Lt.-Col. de Léry and Major Raymond	200
Indians	150

Summary:

Firing Line	461
Reserves	1131
Total	1592[21]

The initial estimate of Canadian losses gave the following figures:

Canadian Light Company (Fencibles)	3 Rank and File killed 1 Sergeant, 3 Rank and File wounded
Canadian Voltigeurs	4 Rank and File wounded
Flank Company, 3rd Battalion	1 Captain wounded
Lower Canada Select Embodied	2 Rank and File killed
Militia (Daly's)	6 Rank and File wounded 4 Rank and File missing
Châteauguay Chasseurs	1 Captain wounded.

This count was later amended to two killed, sixteen wounded and four missing, with the discovery that the three Fencible casualties were in fact taken prisoner by the Americans.[22]

On the following morning, 27 October, de Salaberry was reinforced at the abatis by Lieutenant Colonel Macdonell, who moved to that position with three companies of the reserve.

The night of 26 October Purdy's discomfited band had spent under conditions even more trying than the rain-sodden defenders of the abatis. Nerves were on edge as brief exchanges occurred in the wet gloom, either mistakenly with other confused groups of exhausted American stragglers, or with the hovering small numbers of Indians who had dogged Snelling's crossing downriver at Round Point.

The men at this time were formed and lying on the ground they were to occupy, in case of an attack, and were ordered to, and did, immediately rise, seize their arms, and remain under them the residue of the night.

An excessively heavy rain prevented the firing both of the enemy and ourselves, except occasionally a single gun from the former. Our troops were ordered not to fire, but in case of a repetition of attack to charge bayonets (sic) – *this was accordingly done. The enemy charged several times, and as often were put to flight. It is observable in this place, that so greatly were the men overpowered by fatigue...many were unable to conquer their disposition to sleep, and it was not in the power of the officers to keep them awake....The troops at the times of the attack were not in a situation to endure further fatigue – and it is an indubitable fact, that many of them were so debilitated they were unable to proceed with the brigade on its march from the place of its last attack, and actually did not reach the main body until the day after the brigade had joined it, and some not even until the army had reached the Four Corners of Chateauguay.*[23]

On 27 October Purdy's column managed to ford the river and cross to Hampton's new camp, a relatively short distance from the Spears' camp and no more than a few miles from the abatis. The baggage train had moved up to this point on the day of the battle. Here Hampton remained until noon of 28 October.[24]

Contemporary sources differ widely in their estimate of the number of American casualties. Hampton states that the "entire loss of killed, wounded, and missing, does not exceed fifty"; Purdy makes no mention of casualties at all. De Salaberry, in his letter of 1 November to Baynes cites "about 70 killed and 16 prisoners, beside a great number of wounded." O'Sullivan indicates 20 prisoners captured by unspecified forward pickets, which would add to the number taken in the morning, and "upwards of forty of their dead were buried by our troops, independently of those who were buried by the enemy. Among the latter were two or three officers of distinction. Two horses were found dead on the left bank, and the enemy carried off in wagons several of their wounded from that side of the river." At least 10 prisoners were noted arriving in Montreal from Châteauguay.

Cruikshank cites an unnamed "unofficial return" of some weeks later which gave a loss of 21 killed, 33 wounded, and 29 missing, with a Major Baker of the New York Militia named as the only officer wounded. An American list dated 1850 gives 15 killed and 20 wounded. Morrison, as a final note, indicates that the casualties from the exchange heard at midnight were buried on William Bryson's land (Lot 12) between Ormstown and Allans Corners, "near two elm trees."[25]

At his camp, Hampton called a council of war and to it put the following question:

Is it advisable, under existing circumstances, to renew the attack on the enemy's position; and, if not, what position is it advisable for the army to take, until it can receive advices of the advance of the grand army down the St. Lawrence?

Hampton was no doubt pleased with the reply to his query.

It is the unanimous opinion of this council that it is necessary, for the

25 Round Point. Purdy's retiring column took up a defensive position in the foreground bend in the river, while transferring the wounded and Snelling's men; the latter, after crossing the river, retired to Spears' along the roadway in the distance. (The broken line on Round Point indicates the approximate edge of the American troops in camp.)

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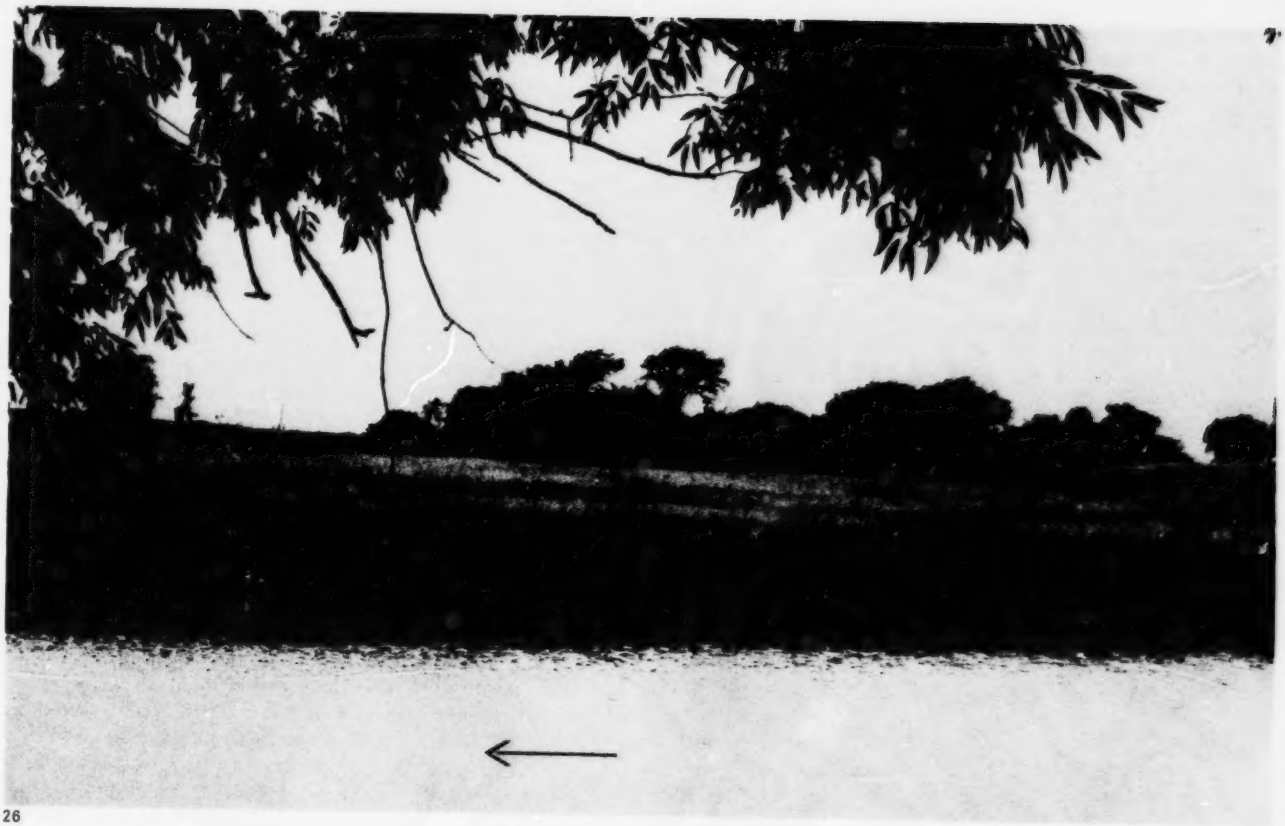
26 View across the river from the Cross farm to the bank of Round Point, probably at the point where the floating log bridge was built. (Arrow indicates the direction of the flow of the river.)



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preservation of this army and the fulfilment of the ostensible views of the government, that we immediately return by orderly marches to such a position (Chateauguay) as will secure our communications with the United States, either to retire into winter quarters or to be ready to strike below.

Accordingly, the army moved out at noon on 28 October, a movement which was reported to de Salaberry by a reconnaissance party led by Colonel Hughes of the Royal Engineers. This news led de Salaberry to send out Captain Lamothe with a large party of Indians to observe the retirement which was already being dogged by the scattered groups of warriors who had followed on the Americans' heels right from the retirement on the afternoon of 26 October. A working party of the Beauharnois militia was also sent out under Captain Debartzch to destroy the temporary bridges Hampton's men had built to within half a mile of Hampton's camp and scout Purdy's campsites on the far shore. They returned with a sizeable amount of discarded equipment,[26] having found Purdy's route strewn with "a large quantity of muskets, drums, knapsacks, provisions, etc." De Salaberry later totalled the muskets recovered at 150, along with 6 drums.

Hampton's march had taken him back some six miles to a point then known as Piper's Road. Here, on the evening of 29 October, Captain Lamothe and his Indians attacked the American perimeter, killing one sentry and wounding seven. The following day Hampton's army again took to the road and was escorted from Canadian territory by a watchful Indian party under another French Canadian officer serving with the Indian department, Captain Dominique Ducharme, who "had distinguished himself so remarkably at the action of Beaver Dams in Upper Canada, only four months before."

On either 28 or 29 October, de Salaberry paid Morrison's father a small sum to scout southward along the cart track across the border to locate Hampton in the United States. When Morrison returned from Four Corners to confirm Hampton's exit from Canada altogether, de Salaberry knew with certainty the danger was momentarily over.[27]

The main American column under James Wilkinson was descending upon Montreal at the time of Hampton's withdrawal, and still posed the most serious threat to Lower Canada. Upper Canadian defence had been shaken by the victory Perry had scored on Lake Erie, and the subsequent rout of Procter by American forces under William Harrison on the Thames. A successful attack by Wilkinson would have made the whole Canadian defence situation serious.

As fortune had it, a force of 800 men slipped successfully out of Kingston under Colonel Morrison and raced to overtake Wilkinson's army, hoping for an opportunity to strike. This opportunity presented itself finally at Crysler's Farm on 11 November 1813. An uncoordinated American attack against the tight, disciplined line of Morrison's 800 came to no avail, and Wilkinson, battling illness, used the next day's news of Hampton's withdrawal to call off the campaign. A council of war sent his army back to winter quarters in the United States.

The disasters in the west were softened somewhat for the British by the good luck in the east; to this was added the opportunity which now presented itself in the Niagara region, left by Wilkinson under little more than a militia guard. Swift action by Lieutenant General Drummond and Colonel Murray saw British troops not only retake Fort George, but cross to seize Fort Niagara at bayonet point. Passions were high as the year drew to a close. The American garrison holding Fort George had put the Canadian village of Newark to the torch while retreating, and Drummond's force carried their own torches in retaliation, capturing and destroying Fort Schlos-

ser, Black Rock, Lewiston, and Buffalo. The year 1813 ended with the real American victories at the Thames and on Lake Erie obscured by the failures of Wilkinson and Hampton, and finally overshadowed by the destructive British sweep along the Niagara frontier.

As the 1814 season approached, there was ground for optimism in the Canadas. Almost as Procter fled from the Thames and Morrison and de Salaberry stood firm further east, the Grande Armée of Napoleon was being decimated at Leipzig (16-19 October 1813). The might of Britain and her European allies combined with the exhaustion and disillusionment of the French brought about Napoleon's abdication in April, 1814. The British government informed Prevost that there was every intention of releasing veteran British regular units to Canada, and of undertaking an aggressive policy against the United States. Not only would the ruinous coastal blockade be tightened but the British War Office formulated a plan of broad dimensions. An invasion south through the Champlain route was intended to encourage the already strong New England aversion to continuance of the war, and amphibious forces were to direct punitive raids along the eastern seaboard culminating in the seizure and blockade of New Orleans and the Mississippi. The Duke of Wellington frankly stated he knew of no particular manner in which a single attack could injure the far-flung republic and viewed the plans with some pessimism; the War Office was determined to press on.

American feelings were mixed. The British coastal blockade was enormously successful and promised to become even more formidable. The impending arrival of veteran British regular units into Canada posed only trouble for Secretary Armstrong and his inconsistent forces, and produced a sense of desperation.

A cause for American pride, however, was the rapidly developing capacity of their troops in the field. Younger men such as Winfield Scott and Izard occupied senior command positions. Scott himself relentlessly drilled his own brigade on the Niagara frontier over the 1813-14 winter until it was the equal in quality of anything the British could field. The mood as the snows began to melt was one of urgency. The American army had new tools to do the job; the question was whether the job could be done before Wellington's veterans began pouring in numbers from the ships at Quebec.

June became the critical month. Aside from the naval construction race on Lake Ontario, little was accomplished in the early spring by either side, each suffering from financial and manpower over-extension. The American army in the Niagara region slowly built its strength toward a June invasion across the river. Prevost's European reinforcements did not begin arriving until June. Both sides contented themselves with brief raids and depredations along the Montreal-Niagara frontier, and unimportant action in the remote west.

In July, the United States moved decisively across the Niagara River. Fort Erie fell to General Brown's new army, and the British-Canadian defending forces at Fort George, under Riall, marched south to engage them. The result was a vindication of Winfield Scott's tireless training, as his brigade and the other American units fought a steady battle that forced Riall to retire on 4 July at Chippawa. Only lack of co-operation from the American naval forces on Lake Ontario prevented Brown from making a deep advance into Upper Canada. As it was, he was forced to withdraw while the British regrouped, both to pursue him and menace his American depots. Brown turned and threw his troops against the British at Lundy's Lane on 25 July. This indecisive but savage engagement ended with British possession of the battlefield and the withdrawal of Brown's tattered force to Fort Erie. Here he resisted a determined British assault until 21 September when the latter finally retired. Both sides suffered heavily from this engagement, perhaps the most hotly contested confrontation of the war. Although Izard arrived with reinforcements from Plattsburg, he could accomplish little without naval help, and merely carried out raids until the final evacuation and destruction of Fort Erie in November.

Meanwhile, the invasion down the Champlain valley had been undertaken at Prevost's decision, after the British government had given him the choice of Sackets Harbor or Plattsburg. Izard had fortified the latter before being sent protesting to the Niagara frontier.

The American naval inadequacy on the lake had been rectified by the efforts of Thomas Macdonough, U.S.N.; nonetheless, when Prevost crossed the border with a well-trained army of 15,000 on 3 September, there was little standing in his way. Prevost's hesitancy caused him to halt at Plattsburg to await a naval victory on the lake beside him. When Macdonough defeated Downie's incompletely prepared British lake force and his own attack scheme ran into initial difficulties, Prevost retired to Montreal, to the great disgust of the veterans he led.

The British had been putting pressure on the eastern seaboard, where Robert Ross's force had burned public buildings in Washington on 24 August. The one gleam in an otherwise gloomy picture for the Americans was the Fort McHenry bombardment at Baltimore, where the surviving flagstaff inspired Francis Scott Key three days after Prevost's retreat from Plattsburg. As fall and winter approached, nothing permanent has been achieved in any northern theatre. The one remaining major military operation of the war, the assault on New Orleans, climaxed on 8 January 1815 with the appalling loss of over 2,000 British regulars before the cotton bale palisades of Andrew Jackson's defenders.

The American government, deep in the gloom of March 1813, had agreed to an offer from the czar of Russia to mediate, and had hurried a negotiating team to St. Petersburg to conclude peace. Britain declined comment until the new year, 1814, when, while rejecting the czar's offer of mediation, she offered to negotiate directly with the United States. It was not until after Napoleon's defeat that the meeting place of Ghent was agreed to, by which time British public opinion was calling for punishment of the United States rather than negotiation. The negotiations commenced in August, with British demands being somewhat severe. As time, however, brought news of Prevost's retirement, the inconclusive coastal expeditions and growing uneasiness in Europe, these demands were eased. Moderation was further supported by the Duke of Wellington, who argued against excessive British claims.

The belligerency of both sides faded as Christmas approached, and the earnest desire of both parties to conclude matters produced a peace settlement on Christmas Eve, 1814, based on *status quo ante bellum*. None of the original problems which had led to the war were resolved. The neutrality of the settlement left resolution of the differences which caused the war to the years ahead.

Some historians speculate that the news of the British disaster at New Orleans, which arrived too late to influence the Treaty of Ghent, might have hardened the American position. Yet this position was fairly uncomplicated from the beginning; peace without any concessions. What it might have done was speed British determination to end the affair. This, too, was already present. Meanwhile the Canadian colonies realized that their existence had been preserved in no small part by their own work and determination.

Major General Hampton's hesitancy or unwillingness to engage his troops fully and quickly must stand as the primary reason for the Canadian victory at Châteauguay. The numerical odds were overwhelmingly in his favour, even had the Canadians been prepared to contest the issue to the last man. Whether Hampton had no intention of completing his part of the campaign remains open to speculation. Purdy's receipt of the withdrawal order at the comparatively early hour of 2:00 P.M. indicates, at the very least that Hampton was unwilling to undertake any action that did not guarantee absolute certainty of success, and perhaps, if other observers are correct, not even that. Hampton appears to claim that the order which he received for shelters dashed his hopes of receiving any real support, and thus quashed his desire to continue. It may have gone deeper than that, into a desire to avoid any trying situation which might benefit his political and personal rival, Wilkinson.

On the other hand, a sound plan, even if poorly executed, can sometimes succeed; de Salaberry's choice of ground and defences did much to prevent this happening. His fortified position lay at the end of a "funnel" of open territory, flanked by the river and swampy woods and ending at the comparatively narrow front of the abatis. The tree cover prevented any useful application of artillery. The abatis entanglement prevented the employment of cavalry such as Harrison used on the Thames and, as well, presented a narrow front to a mass of regular troops trained for linear and

open engagements. Even the weakest points at the fords in the rear were shielded by the same heavy bush, which increased the effectiveness of the entrenched positions.

The defensive tactics which were employed by de Salaberry and Macdonell were most successful. The *ruse de guerre* of bugling, shouts and war whoops was a clever stroke by imaginative leaders which apparently actually did deceive the attackers and hasten the decision to retreat. The concentration of fire from prepared positions was well used by de Salaberry, notably in the enfilading fire which broke up the river bank rush of Purdy's men. In general de Salaberry displayed sound tactical judgement and a willingness to seize the initiative from the enemy.

By adopting a flexible "defence in depth" policy rather than a single frontal position, the Canadians were prepared to the best of their ability to counter a penetration of the initial line of defence and any flanking movement such as Purdy attempted. As well, the dispositions of the forward troops made economical use of manpower resources in relation to the terrain : in this case the most apparent example is the use on the abatis right flank of 22 Indians who were aided by the swampy terrain in preventing a flanking attempt.

Of importance is the motivation of the defenders, both at the abatis and on the opposite shore. In no case, by and large, did the defending forces break and run from the action. The exception was Brugière's company of Chasseurs which encountered Purdy's two lead companies. Yet in this case the unseasoned militiamen rallied almost immediately, and it should be noted that the American regulars they faced had broken to the rear as well. The dogged assault on Purdy's column of Captain Charles Daly and his company was the stuff of heroism and should be recognized as such.

Wilkinson seized upon Hampton's reversal to defend his own hesitant views.

After what has passed between us, you can perhaps conceive my amazement and chagrin at the conduct of Major General Hampton. The game was in view, and, had he performed the junction directed, would have been ours in eight or ten days. But he chose to recede, in order to cooperate and my dawning hopes, and the hopes and honour of the army were blasted.

The hopes and honour of the army were blasted, it would appear, as much by Wilkinson's attempt to set up an escape route from a campaign with which he was increasingly disenchanted. At the beginning of November, Hampton's defeat notwithstanding, Wilkinson still had an intact army which could have carried Montreal on its own. But Wilkinson appeared to have other ideas ; ideas which he put into form when, on 6 November, he wrote to Hampton and cooly ordered him to march to meet the St. Lawrence army at St. Regis on 9 or 10 November, bringing with him the incredible amount of two or three months' supplies for Wilkinson's army.[1]

Hampton, writing very carefully, politely declined the junction at St. Regis (although suggesting some other point might be suitable) and stated his men could only carry what they could on their backs, and no more. He hoped, however, "to be able to prevent your starving."

Wilkinson's reply conveniently overlooked the battle at Crysler's Farm, and landed the blame squarely on Hampton for the excuse Wilkinson sought.

27 Drawing showing the uniforms of the 2nd U.S. Light Dragoons, 1812-14. (*The Company of Military Historians, Drawing by Hugh Charles McBarron.*)
28 Reproduction of a pen sketch showing an officer in the 1813 uniform of the Canadian Voltigeurs. (*Baby Collection, Université de Montréal.*)

Headquarters, near Cornwall (U.C.)
November 12th, 1813

Sir.
I had this day the honour to receive your letter of the 8th instant, by Colonel Atkinson, and want language to express my sorrow for your determination not to join the division under your command with the troops under my immediate orders.

As such resolution defeats the grand objects of the campaign in this quarter, which, before the receipt of your letter, were thought to be completely within our power, no suspicion being entertained that you would decline the junction directed, it will oblige us to take post at French Mills, on Salmon River, or in their vicinity, for the winter.

I have the honour to be, &c.
Jas. Wilkinson[2]

Wilkinson lost no time in publishing a general order on the following day which announced Hampton's culpability in the strongest and most obvious terms. A. T. Mahan sums up this situation as placing blame on both Hampton and Wilkinson, but with the results mentioned.

There can be no doubt that [Hampton's] *action was precipitate, unnecessary, contrary to orders, and therefore militarily culpable. It gave Wilkinson the excuse, probably much desired, for abruptly closing a campaign which had been ludicrously inefficient from the first, and under his leadership might well have ended in a manner even more mortifying.*

Some time before Wilkinson's decision was known in Canada, de Salaberry had written to O'Sullivan to say, among other things, "Hampton's retreat is a most fortunate circumstance for this province. I think t'would have been difficult to have managed both armies." Little did de Salaberry realize that he had, in fact, quite probably handled them both,[3] for his sturdy defence along the Châteauguay had not only caused Hampton to retire but provided Wilkinson with the excuse to do so as well.

To Canadians there were very distinct feelings generated by the victory at Châteauguay, beside the immediate ones of escape from the peril of invasion.

The affair near the lines, at the River Chateauguay, is the first in which any considerable number of the natives

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28

of this Province have been engaged with the Americans since the war. In this case, the whole of our force, with a very few exceptions, from the commander downwards, were Canadians. The General Order issued on the subject, shew that the result has been such as was expected from the former character of the people, and the zeal which they have repeatedly shewn for the defence of their country. We are informed, upon authority which we deem unexceptionable, that the enemy lost about 100 men killed in this affair while we lost only 5. This, together with the repulse of the enemy, is incontestable proof of good officers and good soldiers. A few experiments of this kind, will probably convince the Americans that their project of conquering this Province is premature.

Clearly Châteauguay is a very real success in the protection of the country by an essentially Canadian defence force against a threatening army several times its size. The engagement earned de Salaberry's succinct comment that "This is certainly a most extraordinary affair."[4]

For the American public, which was ending the second year of lacklustre military efforts against Canada, the Wilkinson and Hampton failures paraded through the pages of unbelieving and finally cynical newspapers and periodicals, which carried the painful details of the recriminatory correspondence that seemed to lay blame on Armstrong's, Wilkinson's, and Hampton's heads in turn. The public careers of all three men were effectively finished, although Armstrong lasted until the burning of Washington. Thus, in the long run, the path was cleared for men of ability as opposed to men of influence in the American military structure. American military competence on the battlefield in 1814 would give these newer men the role and position they deserved far earlier.

In official American circles, new lessons had been learned. The British assault on Washington brought James Monroe to the secretary of war office. Monroe carefully considered the problem of the Canadian frontier, and, in concert with Major General Jacob Brown, determined in the spring of 1815 that any future campaign against Canada must come as a decisive, severing blow to the St. Lawrence artery. *If we secure the landing of a great force and beat them completely in the field at any point between Kingston and Montreal, or wherever we select, we shall be able to drive them into Quebec.*

In effect, it had taken three years and the sobering effects of the Wilkinson-Hampton debacle to clearly etch a tactical policy which should have carried the day in American planning circles from the outset. Late as it was, the Monroe-Brown plan stood every chance of winning where Wilkinson and Hampton had lost. The Treaty of Ghent halted any such plans, but

Had the war continued it was the intention of the American government to have interrupted our Transport Communications by the St. Lawrence to the Lower Province in the event of which an attempt at inland conveyance must have been made, or we must have endeavoured to dislodge the enemy from the South Shore of the River by transferring one seat of War thither. The American general Brown, thinking secrecy no longer necessary, explained to me all that had been in contemplation for the ensuing campaign, which in my opinion would have answered their expectations.[5]

That those expectations had not been placed within the American grasp in 1813 had been due in no small way to the gallant defence on the Châteauguay River, Lower Canada, on Tuesday, 26 October 1813.

Endnotes

Preliminary American Moves

1 J. Mackay Hitsman, *The Incredible War of 1812* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 104.
2 Harry L. Coles, *The War of 1812* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 109; Irving Brant, *James Madison: Commander-In-Chief, 1812-1836* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1961), Vol. 6, p. 164; John Brannan, *Official Letters of the Military and Naval Officers of the United States, During the War with Great Britain in the Years 1812, 13, 14, and 15.* (Washington: Way and Gideon, 1823), p. 133, Armstrong to Dearborn, 10 February 1813.
3 Irving Brant, op. cit., pp. 166, 168. Hampton had served well during the Revolutionary War with Marion and Sumter in the Carolinas; Harry L. Coles, op. cit., p. 143.
4 John Brannan, op. cit., p. 186, Armstrong to Wilkinson, 5 August 1813. Armstrong is acquainting Wilkinson with the results of the Madison conversations.
5 Ibid., p. 187, Wilkinson to Armstrong, 6 August 1813; p. 189, Armstrong to Wilkinson, 8 August 1813; p. 190, Armstrong to Wilkinson, 9 August 1813; p. 191, Wilkinson to Armstrong, 21 August 1813; Harry L. Coles, op. cit., p. 144; Irving Brant, op. cit., p. 213; John Brannan, op. cit., p. 193, Armstrong to Wilkinson, 6 September 1813.
6 William James, *A Full and Correct Account of the Military Occurrences of the Late War Between Great Britain and the United States of America* (London: Joyce Gold, 1818), p. 305; William D. Lighthall, *An Account of the Battle of Chateauguay* (Montreal: W. Drysdale and Company, 1889), p. 8. Lighthall breaks this down into 4,053 regular infantry and 1,500 militia; Robert Christie, *A Compendious History of the Late War* (Boston: J. W. Burditt, 1815) (hereafter cited as *Compendious History*), p. 10, Hampton to Armstrong, 4 October 1813; Frederic P. Todd to René Chartrand, National Historic Sites Service, 11 February 1971; M. J. McAfee, Curator, West Point Military Museum, to V. Suthren, 19 March 1971, citing F. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the U.S. Army* (n.p., n.d.); also United States National Archives, Record Group 94, *Returns of the Killed and Wounded of American Troops in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British or Mexican Troops from the Year 1790 to the Close of the War with Mexico, in 1848.* (Compiled by Lieutenant Colonel J. H. Eaton, 3rd Infantry, 1850-51), manuscript ledger; Frederic P. Todd, op. cit.; Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the War of 1812* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1869), p. 648. This service is debatable, as New York militia records are virtually unusable, and militia regularly refused to cross national borders.
7 John Brannan, op. cit., p. 212, Wilkinson to Armstrong, 20 September 1813; ibid., p. 193, Armstrong to Wilkinson, 6 September 1813.
8 James R. Jacobs, *The Beginnings of the U.S. Army, 1783-1812* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 384.
9 *Dictionary of American Biography*, s.v. "Hampton, Wade."
10 *The National Cyclopedia of American Biography* (New York: James T. White and Company, 1900), Vol. 10, p. 183.
11 Harry Hampton, Columbia, South Carolina, to Victor J. H. Suthren, 12 July 1971. There have been suggestions as well that Wilkinson was involved in the murder of Meriwether Lewis on the Natchez Trace in 1809.
12 Colonel Arthur P. Wade, United States Army Staff, commander in chief, Pacific, to Victor J. H. Suthren, 15 August 1971.
13 Irving Brant, op. cit., p. 221; John Brannan, op. cit., p. 219, Wilkinson to Armstrong, 26 September 1813.
14 Robert Christie, *Compendious History*, p. 114.
15 Benson J. Lossing, op. cit., p. 648.

Canadian Defensive Preparation

1 Canada. Public Archives (hereafter cited as PAC), RG8, D10, Vol. 1707, p. 6, Prevost to Lord Liverpool, "Synopsis of Military Positions in Canada," Quebec, 8 May 1812.
2 Ibid., pp. 7, 9. His appreciation of them was that they were "a mere posse, ill armed and without discipline."
3 Ibid., p. 7; Order, Freer to Prevost, Quebec, 15 April 1812, authorizing Brevet Major Charles de Salaberry to recruit for the regiment to be known as the Voltigeurs. University of Montreal, Baby Collection, *Documents Militaires*, 1803-13, Fol. 86; ibid., brigade order, D. Shekleton to Capt. Perrault, Voltigeurs, ordering a party to move to Chambly, Montreal, 17 May 1812.
4 PAC, RG8, D10, Vol. 1707, p. 9, Prevost to Lord Liverpool.
5 Ibid., p. 22, "Abstract of General Return of the Troops Stationed in Canada under the Command of his Excellency Lt.-General Sir George Prevost, Bt.," adjutant general's office, Quebec, 30 July 1812.
6 Ibid., p. 18, "Return of the Troops in Montreal District," J. Vincent, Montreal, 4 July 1812.
7 University of Montreal, Baby Collection, *Documents Militaires*, Fol. 86, F. Vassal de Monviel, adjutant general of militia, to Lieutenant Colonel L. G. Ecuier, Commanding Division, Longue Pointe, Montreal, 24 July 1812.
8 William Dunlop, "Recollections of the American War of 1812-1814," in: *Tiger Dunlop's Upper Canada*, ed. Malcolm Ross (Toronto: McClellan and Stewart, 1967), p. 10.
9 PAC, RG8, D10, Vol. 1707, p. 101.
10 PAC, RG8, 1, D2, C Series, Vol. 1170, p. 33, general order, Montreal, 27 September 1813. Of interest is the general order of the same date signed at La Prairie which gives a rum issue to all troops serving on the south shore, p. 38.
11 Ibid., p. 45, general order, Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue and Montreal, 4 October 1813; ibid., p. 85, general order, Montreal, 8 October 1813. Some seven days after the brief skirmish with Hampton at the latter's camp in New York state; ibid., p. 37.
12 Ibid., p. 37.
13 Ibid., p. 58, general order, La Prairie, 9 October 1813; Movements between this date and the third week in October, when Hampton moved down the Châteauguay, are difficult to trace. The probability is that all those units comprising the "advance" were concentrated in the La Prairie-Caughnawaga area. De Salaberry, posted with the Voltigeurs to St. Philippe in 1812, is suggested to have been personally responsible for the picket system along the Châteauguay and Lacolle rivers. *See* Ernest Cruikshank, "From Isle aux Noix to Chateauguay," *Royal Society of Canada, Proceedings and Transactions*, 3rd ser., Vol. 8 (June 1914), pp. 25-102.

14 Charles Marie Boissonnault, *Histoire Politico-Militaire des Canadiens Français* (Trois-Rivières: Editions du Bien Public, 1967), p. 112, citing entry for 21 October 1813: From Halfway House, where we were during May, we were sent to Chambly; from Chambly we went to Plattsburg, about 15 leagues from the lines on Lake Champlain; from there, we returned to Chambly where we joined the regiment; there, four of our companies left us for Upper Canada where they are at present. From Chambly, we went to Laprairie, from there to St. Philippe; from St. Philippe our company was sent to Douglas Settlement, near the lines, where we were joined by two companies of Meurons; we stayed there three days and came back to St. Philippe; the day following our arrival we received orders to go to Saint Pierre.

15 PAC, RG8, 1, D2, C Series, Vol. 1170, p. 59, general order, Montreal, 12 October 1813; ibid., p. 66, general order, Montreal, 17 October 1813; Benjamin Sulte, "Qui Commandait à Châteauguay?" *Bulletin de Recherches Historiques*, Vol. 1 (July 1895), p. 97.

16 Henry James Morgan, *Sketches of Celebrated Canadians* (Quebec: Hunter, Rose and Co., 1862), p. 197. His wife was Mlle Anne Julie Hertel de Rouville, from whom Madame Georges P. Vanier traces direct descent.

17 John C. Hopkins, *Canada: An Encyclopedia of the Country* (Toronto: Linscott Publishing Co., n.d.), Vol. 1, p. 183; Lukin H. Irving, *Officers of the British Forces in Canada During the War of 1812* (Welland: Canadian Military Institute, 1908), p. 28.

Opening Moves Toward Battle

1 Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 69, T. Macdonough to the Secretary of the Navy, 9 September 1813; John Brannan, op. cit., p. 275, Colonel Robert Purdy's report to Wilkinson, ——November 1813.

2 Robert Sellar, *The U.S. Campaign of 1813 to Capture Montreal* (Huntingdon: The Gleaner Press, 1913) (hereafter cited as *U.S. Campaign*), p. 4. Prevost may have been concerned with planning offensive action in the west; John Brannan, op. cit., p. 275, Purdy's report.

3 Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 69.

4 John Brannan, op. cit., p. 275, Purdy's report; Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 70.

5 Ibid.; William F. Coffin, *1812: The War, and its Moral: a Canadian Chronicle* (Montreal: John Lovell, 1864), p. 243. The Voltigeurs had marched hastily down the road from l'Acadie, and arrived in time to harrass Hampton's force in its last hours at Odelltown. On retiring, they worked on the blockading of the cart track north.

6 Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 4.

7 Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 70, Hampton claimed the need to abandon Odelltown after "having some doubts of the practicability of procuring water for the troops, horses, and teams; Robert Christie, *Compendious History*, p. 10.

8 Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 4.

9 John Brannan, op. cit., p. 275, Purdy's report.

10 Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 71.

11 Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 5.

12 Robert Christie, *Memoirs of the Administration of the Colonial Government of Lower Canada by Sir James Craig and Sir George Prevost from the Year 1807 until the Year 1815* . . . (Quebec: n.p., 1818) (hereafter cited as *Memoirs*), p. 100. The Voltigeurs had apparently bolted in a brief panic, for which de Salaberry showed, it would seem, no ill will; no doubt their performance later in the month led him to feel vindicated in this attitude.

13 Robert Christie, *Compendious History*, p. 100. Lieutenant Charles Pinguet of the Canadian Fencibles gives the following account as cited in Benjamin Sulte, *La Bataille de Châteauguay* (Quebec: Demers et Frère, 1899), p. 23; "Our company was left there, in company with some Voltigeurs with whom and about a hundred savages we had been sent to reconnoitre the enemy below the lines at a place called Four Corners, where the Americans had a camp of five thousand regulars and twenty-four pieces of artillery of different calibres. Our savages killed a lieutenant, four soldiers, and caused to retire (more I believe by their cries than anything else) five or six hundred men who composed the advance guard of the enemy, from which the camp could have been about one mile. From there we returned to Chateauguay."

14 Robert Christie, *Compendious History*, p. 100.

15 Ibid., p. 114, Hampton to Armstrong, 4 October 1813.

16 PAC, RG8, D10, Vol. 1707, n.p., Sheaffe to Freer, La Prairie, 13 October 1813.

17 Robert Christie, *Compendious History*, p. 115, Hampton to Armstrong, 1 November 1813; Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 6.

18 Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 77; Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 6.

19 Robert Christie, *Compendious History*, p. 115, Hampton to Armstrong, 1 November 1813. Purdy said of the march, "The march was very fatiguing, equalled only by another that soon followed. Credit is due to both the officers and the soldiers for their orderly conduct, patience and perseverance, in surmounting the incredible obstacles the enemy threw in their way;" John Brannan, op. cit., p. 275, Purdy's report.

20 Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 6. The distance from Four Corners is quoted as 23 miles.

21 Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 102; W. Lighthall, op. cit., p. 16; Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 6.

22 The Canadian position lay in woods at the other end of a relatively cleared area commencing at Spears'.

23 Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 116, Hampton's report.

24 Ibid., p. 116.

25 Possibly at La Fourche, the junction of the Châteauguay and English rivers.

26 *The Quebec Mercury*, Tuesday, 9 November 1813, "An Eyewitness Account," by "Témoin Oculaire," attributed to Michael O'Sullivan; William Lighthall, op. cit., p. 16.

27 William Wood, *Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1920-28), p. 396, de Salaberry to Baynes, 1 November 1813; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.

28 Ibid.; William Wood, op. cit., p. 382, advance brigade order, Major Burke to Colonel de Lery, 25 October 1813. O'Sullivan cites a party of thirty Beauharnois axemen.

The Battle Site

1 Lukin H. Irving, *Officers of the British Forces in Canada During the War of 1812* (Welland: Canadian Military Institute, 1908), p. 191; Louis François Georges Baby, *Chateauguay: Qui Est "Témoin Oculaire" et sa description de la bataille est-elle correcte?* (Montreal: A.-R. Pelletier, 1900), passim. Baby's reasoned argument largely ended speculation as to the identity of Témoin Oculaire.

2 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; One calculation of the "three to four arpents" would make the abatis between 586 and 768 feet in length.

3 University of Montreal, Baby Collection, *Correspondance Générale*, p. 1086, Michael O'Sullivan to Charles de Salaberry, Montreal, 6 November 1813; ibid., p. 1151, Charles de Salaberry to Michael O'Sullivan, Chambly, 12 November 1813.

4 William Wood, op. cit., p. 396, de Salaberry to Baynes, advanced posts, 1 November 1813.

5 Benjamin Sulte, op. cit., p. 36, citing Pinguet: Seeing that the enemy was not advancing, we started to fortify our position with trees and to dig a trench. We spent three days and three nights behind these trenches waiting for the enemy. About a half league above us, was a wooded point which extended into the river; only the road crossed it. Colonel de Salaberry had an abatis built there which our pickets have since guarded and where the battle took place. The abatis was started on Sunday [24 October].

6 Joseph Bouchette, *A Geographical Description of the Province of Lower Canada* . . . (London: William Faden, 1815), map facing p. 117.

7 *The Montreal Gazette*, Saturday, 11 May 1895, n.p., Interview with Robert Morrison; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 423.

8 Quebec. Provincial Archives, original in ink and watercolour on exhibit.

9 Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 7. Sellar makes several errors, including identification of Macdonell's Light Battalion as "Glengarry Highlanders."

10 William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 423, citing Morrison; ibid., p. 396, de Salaberry to Baynes, 1 November 1813.

11 *The Canadian Gleaner* (Huntingdon), 28 March 1895, confidential report, Adjutant General Baynes to Sir George Prevost, n.d.

12 William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 426, citing Morrison; ibid., p. 424; ibid., p. 419, G. Macdonell to Donaldson, Whitehall, 14 January 1817: "Major General De Watteville having only come up from his station some miles in the rear at the close of the affair, after the enemy had been defeated, in consequence of a notification sent to him by myself that even then we were warmly engaged by the enemy."

13 Ibid., p. 424, citing Morrison; interview by Victor J. H. Suthren 12 July 1971.

14 Joseph Bouchette, *The British Dominions in North America; or, A Topographical and Statistical Description of the Provinces of Lower and Upper Canada* . . . (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1832), Vol. 2, p. 306; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 427, citing Morrison; ibid., p. 425.

15 Consult plans included in text.

The Battle

1 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit. This may include Benson's company of Little Falls, New York, men; Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 7.

2 John Brannan, op. cit., p. 250, Hampton's report.

3 Ibid., p. 276, Purdy's report. Purdy's exact position at sunrise is difficult to pinpoint; his "six miles" would put him well past the fords. The likelihood is that Purdy's men were approximately in the vicinity of present-day Brysonville or slightly downstream; Robert Sellar, *The Histories of the County of Huntingdon and of the Seignories of Chateauguay and Beauharnois, from their First Settlement to the Year 1838* (Huntingdon: The Canadian Gleaner, 1888) (hereafter cited as *History*), p. 95. Sellar identifies Hampton's camp just west of Ormstown on Lots 1 to 3 as per the 1888 cadestral division, at the junction of the Outardes and Châteauguay rivers.

4 Ibid., p. 105; Sellar suggests that de Salaberry had an Indian picket upriver at Lot 19 which Hampton captured without notice.

5 William Wood, op. cit., p. 403, citing O'Sullivan; ibid., p. 85.

6 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; Benjamin Sulte, op. cit., p. 45, citing Pinguet: On Tuesday (26 October), as the woodcutters (of the abatis placed in front of the four lines) were finishing a few things not yet done, a party of 10 men from our company (Fencibles) and of 20 men from the Voltigeurs, who were ahead (further than the abatis) to protect the workers, noticed the enemy's approaching advanced guard. Our men fired a few rounds at the enemy, sounding the alarm. Our company (Ferguson) was soon sent to the abatis with orders to start and sustain the action, which was done.

7 John Fraser, "The March of the Six Hundred McDonell Men," in: *Canadian Pen and Ink Sketches*, (Montreal: Gazette Printing Company, 1890), p. 39; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 423, citing Morrison: "They camped where my barns are;" ibid., p. 428.

8 Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 116, Hampton's report.

9 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; William D. Lighthall, op. cit., p. 17.

10 Ibid., p. 17; Robert Sellar, *History*, p. 9; Sellar suggests with some logic that the abatis pickets may have seen Purdy's men across the river early in the morning.

11 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 116, Hampton's report.
12 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; the de Rouville plan; Charles Marie Boissonnault, op. cit., p. 109; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 427, citing Morrison.
13 Ibid., p. 427; ibid., p. 85; the de Rouville plan; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 427, citing Morrison, who identifies the location of the skirmish as Lot 36, slightly upriver of the present (1971) marker.
14 Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 10. As the messenger mistakenly returned to Spears' first, Hampton did not receive it until already moving on the abatis; John Brannan, op. cit., p. 276, Purdy's report. Although no Canadian sources mentioned Indians as being with Daly or Brugière, the likelihood seems to be that some attached themselves to these companies and engaged with them in the attacks on Purdy. Morrison mentions Indians on the far bank, and it does not appear that mention of Indians in American reports sprang from the latter's apprehensive fear of them.
15 Robert Sellar, *U.S. Campaign*, p. 9; Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 116, Hampton's report; Charles Marie Boissonnault, op. cit., p. 109; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 429, citing Morrison.
16 William Lighthall, op. cit., p. 19; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit. The credit for the distracting use of the bugles appears to lie largely with Macdonell, if O'Sullivan's account is accurate. De Salaberry approved of O'Sullivan's facts, and the latter clearly suggests that it was Macdonell's orders which initiated the bugling in the reserves. De Salaberry's own use of shouting and his few bugles do not conflict with the very real credit owing to Macdonell; Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 117, Hampton's report. Retiring members of Purdy's column, hearing the noise, carried reports of it to Purdy and later Hampton; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.
17 John Brannan, op. cit., p. 276, Purdy's report. "About 2 o'clock the enemy made a furious attack. . . . Unfortunately the word 'retreat' was heard, which for a short time spread confusion among the several corps. A sufficient number, however, remained firm, and the enemy was soon compelled to retire;" *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; William Lighthall, op. cit., p. 20; A later claim by Schiller's family for a medal gives the details of this episode.
18 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; William Wood, op. cit., p. 407; De Salaberry's love of stumps as lookouts led his father to wryly comment, "Tu es, je pense, le premier général qui ait gagné une bataille étant grimpé sur un souche;" Benjamin Sulte, *Bulletin de Recherches Historiques*, Vol. 28 (January 1922), p. 15, L. de Salaberry to C. de Salaberry, Beauport, 6 November 1813; Charles Marie Boissonault, op. cit., p. 111; William James, op. cit., p. 311; Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 117, Hampton's report; Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 89, suggests an average per man ammunition expenditure of between 35 and 40 rounds.
19 William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 424, citing Morrison; Directly across from the Cross farm house as it stood in 1971; John Brannan, op. cit., p. 276, Purdy's report.
20 William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 424, citing Morrison; Robert Sellar, *History*, p. 140; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 426, citing Morrison; Robert Sellar, *History*, p. 108; Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 88; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 392, Prevost to Bathurst, Montreal, 30 October 1813.
21 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; William Wood, op. cit., p. 391, de Salaberry to his father, "dans le bois en haut de la Rivière," 29 October 1813; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 1, p. 85.
22 *The Montreal Gazette*, Tuesday, 2 November 1813, general order, E. Baynes, La Fourche on the Châteauguay River, n.d.; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; This may have occurred during the 10:00 A.M. picket clash or during the skirmishing during the retreat at the abatis in the afternoon.
23 Ibid.; John Brannan, op. cit., p. 277, Purdy's report.
24 Ibid., p. 277; Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 117, Hampton's report; William Wood, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 424, cites Morrison as identifying this as Neil Morrison's land, where "a few apple trees are still to be seen."
25 Ibid., p. 397; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; *The Montreal Gazette*, Tuesday, 2 November 1813; Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 89; United States. National Archives, RG94, Manuscript Ledger, "Returns of the Killed and Wounded of American troops in Battles or Engagements with Indians, British or Mexican troops from the year 1790, to the Close of the War with Mexico 1848," compiled by Lieutenant Colonel J. H. Eaton, 3rd U.S. Infantry, 1850-51; Morrison, *The Montreal Gazette*, op. cit.
26 Robert Christie, *Memoirs*, p. 118, Hampton's report; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; Robert Sellar, *History*, p. 143, also states they found American dead in the vicinity of the floating bridge.
27 *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; William Wood, op. cit., p. 396, de Salaberry to Baynes, advanced posts, 1 November 1813, and Vol. 2, p. 425, citing Morrison; *The Quebec Mercury*, op. cit.; Ernest Cruikshank, op. cit., p. 90.

The Meaning of Châteauguay for Canada

1 John Brannan, op. cit., p. 274, Wilkinson to Armstrong, French Mills, 17 November 1813; ibid., p. 258, Wilkinson to Hampton, 6 November 1813.
2 Ibid., p. 259, Hampton to Wilkinson, 8 November 1813; ibid., p. 268, Wilkinson to Hampton, 12 November 1813.
3 Ibid., p. 269; Alfred T. Mahan, *Sea Power in its Relation to the War of 1812* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1905), Vol. 2, p. 117; University of Montreal, Baby Collection, *Correspondance Générale*, p. 1151, Charles de Salaberry to Michael O'Sullivan, 12 November 1813.
4 *The Quebec Gazette*, Thursday, 4 November 1813; De Salaberry had difficulty in receiving credit for his success in the engagement and did not receive any decoration until 1817, as did Macdonell; William Wood, op. cit., p. 391, Charles de Salaberry to L. de Salaberry, 29 October 1813.
5 Charles Stacey, "An American Plan for a Canadian Campaign," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 46, No. 2 (January 1941), p. 349; ibid., p. 356, Monroe to Brown, 10 February 1815; ibid., p. 355, Major General Robinson to Bathurst, 29 July 1815.

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Primary material held in the Public Archives of Canada formed the principal part of the sources for Canadian preliminary moves prior to the battle, and with the exception of certain missing muster lists for the period including the year 1813, break down as follows:
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MG24, L8, M-2 to M-9, Jacques Viger, "Ma Saberdache."
RG4, B29, Vols. 1-4, Militia Records 1774 to 1865.
RG8, A1, Vols. 700-13, Canadian Troops and Militia; Vols. 791-823, Volunteers; Vols. 1204-70, Letterbooks, English and Canadian Correspondence 1796-1830.
RG8, 1, D2, Vols. 1167½-1194R, 1194U-1195K, 1197-1201, 1203-1203½S, 1458, Order Books 1764-1894.
RG8, 1, D3, Vol. 1202, List of Veterans of the War of 1812.
RG8, 1, D10, Vols. 1705-1712, Freer Papers 1786-1868.
RG8, 1, D13, Vol. 1717, Militia List 1812-15.
RG9, A3, Vols. 1-12, Ordres Généraux 1805-1846.
RG9, A7, Vols. 1-21, Lists of Pay, Engagement, Militia for 1812-15.

As well as published collections of documents which contain not only the official reports of General Hampton and Colonel Purdy, but the correspondence between Hampton, Armstrong and Wilkinson before and after the battle, certain primary documents of key interest in the study of Châteauguay exist in the United States National Archives. These include: Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke, eds., *American State Papers: Military Affairs* (Washington: n.p., 1832-61), Vol. 1; Record Group 94: Returns for the War of 1812. The latter contains the Morning Report for 25 October 1813 for Purdy's brigade, Purdy's brigade for 4 November 1813, and Hampton's Force for 16 September 1813.

The National Archives of Quebec contains a broad selection of secondary material, but holds in the map division an original pen-sketched plan of the battle drawn by M. Hertel de Rouville, who was present at Châteauguay.

The McGill University Lawrence Lande collection of Canadiana provided peripheral material, including a broad series of the Bouchette maps which present in detail the terrain, forest cover and demographic status of Lower Canada in 1813, a collection supported by additional cartographic material held by the Château de Ramezay, Montreal. Of specific interest in university holdings is the original O'Sullivan – de Salaberry correspondence present in the Baby Collection of the Université de Montréal.

Official releases on the battle and later discussions of its significance appeared in newspapers and periodicals both of the period and later, of which the following are of greatest bearing on this study: *The Quebec Mercury*, 1813; *The Montreal Gazette*, 1813; *The Canadian Gleaner*, 1890-1900; and *Nile's Weekly Register* (Baltimore, Maryland), 1813.

Of additional help in cartographic terms were the town files offices and registries of Ormstown, Howick, and Sainte-Martine, Quebec, wherein can be found land ownership registration, the cadestral divisions, and land use listings. Key here is the plot plan held by the Registry of Sainte-Martine of the "Map of the Seigneury of Beauharnois, 1875," by a J. Sullivan. The original, destroyed in a fire, was copied in August of 1928.

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